CLASSIC MUSIC NEVER GETS OLD

DOWN THE LINE

JIMMY A:

CATCHING UP WITH ONE OF OUR FAVORITE ARTISTS

THEO OBRASTOFF
MEN AS TREES WALKING
BILL MALLONEE
FACEDOWN RECORDS

JOSH LORY
VINYL REMAINS
HM MAGAZINE
REVIEWS + MORE

ISSUE 12 FEBRUARY 2012
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(Freedom Firm did not buy this ad nor do they endorse this magazine – just givin' ya food for thought)

THE COLLECTIVE LIVES!

The Down The Line Collective is off to a loud start with the release of Western Grace's punk rock masterpiece *Take Back The Scene*. Details about that one are in the interview with Josh Lory, but you can preview the album at their BandCamp page (westerngrace.bandcamp.com). If you like what you hear, buy the digital version or contact Josh on Facebook to purchase a hard copy.

There are a few other releases that we are working on, but the biggest one is a new release from alterna-rock legends Veil of Ashes! This will actually be a collection of demo songs from the early 90s, but mastered by Jason Martin of Starflyer 59 fame to sound as good as major label quality radio hits. Details are still being worked out, but be on the lookout for *Eternal Teenage Angst* in the near future.

http://downthelinezine.com

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DOWN THE LINE

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WRITE US	Letters and comments need to contain your full name. All submissions become property of Down the Line E-zine and may be edited or condensed. Or even printed out and framed if you really kiss our… um… never mind….

VISION:

Down the Line covers bands that explored the intersection between faith and art in the 1980s through the early 1990s - even though they were probably never accepted in to what is called "Contemporary Christian Music" because they were too edgy or alternative or liberal or for whatever reason. Some of these bands may still be making music today, and others may have moved on. We cover these bands (active or dormant) as well as any new projects by former members of these bands and any new bands that may have the same spirit as these bands.

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LETTERS TO US

Love For Bill Mallonee

Great Interview. I've followed Bill, well as far back as I can remember. The beautiful thing about all of his stuff is that it still breathes. I never tire of it. It only becomes more habitual.

Dallas Pfeiffer

Picked me up some VoL at a time when I was searching for some answers, some solutions to my weaknesses, frailties and addictions. I was hooked from the get-go. The VoL catalogue and the Bill Mallonee catalogue continue to be where I go when I need to know that, yes, someone else knows the struggles and still finds hope. Bill Mallonee is about as "real" an artist and man as you'll ever hear.

Bill, hope you're enjoying life out here in the great Southwest! Looking forward to your next jaunt to Phoenix!

Patrick Mertz

(Both of these comment came from an online exclusive Bill Mallonne article that you can find here: http://downthelinezine.com/bill-mallonee-the-power-and-the-glory/)

But We Dream of Being Fake Famous

Dear DTL:

Hey, thanks for the zine! I just found you guys online (via Bill Mallonee's link to your interview), and now I'm sitting here listening to an unreleased TPC album. Whoda thunk?

I used to play in a "CCM" band. I was not, however, anything even like the fake-famous that makes you. I do still have a band, though, and if we ever produce anything worthwhile, I'll definitely let you guys know.

Also, I could use that cheesecake recipe, if you've got it handy.

peace,
John Caparoon

(thanks John – and we would love to know what you end up doing, fake or otherwise J)

The Shiny Darks Rock!

I just saw your review of my band, The Shiny Darks! Thank you so much for the support! We are still giving away the EP for free. We just want to get our name out there. If there's anything I can do to help you guys, let me know. I am putting your review in our EPK by the way. Thanks again!

Quenton Rockwell

(Thanks Quenton! Glad to know the ep is still free. If someone other there doesn't have it yet – get it now! That is all)

The Waiting Is Almost Over

I have been waiting for the Slide release for quite some time. Glad to hear the album is worth the wait, and I hope to be able to see them live.

Joe C.

(I think the wait nearly killed us all J But if it all works out, look out for a CD review and new interview soon)

Have any other questions, comments, theological musings, etc? We would love to hear them – come be our friend on FaceBook or comment on our blog. We also do that Twitter thing occasionally.

Steve Scott

Emotional Tourist, the new career retrospective release from Arena Rock Recording Company, is finally out. It features 15 tracks from various Steve Scott releases, including both rock anthems and poetry readings. You can get this collection as either a limited edition CD or digital download from emotionaltourist.com.

The Lead / Frank's Enemy

A new post over at the Not Silent page hints that there are long term plans for a new Lead ep with Julio, Nina, and Rob all participating. Frank's Enemy has been releasing songs here and there for a while, but the same post also indicates that there are also long-term plans for a full length album from Frank's Enemy. In the meantime, you can register for Area 1234 and download several Julio Rey-related projects, including the new Frank's Enemy song "@anonymous".

The Prayer Chain

Fans of The Prayer Chain have heard all of the stories surrounding the band's acclaimed release of *Mercury*. We have known for a while that there was an original version that Reunion Records rejected as being difficult to sell. Have you ever wondered what that version sounded like? Well, wonder no more. Now you can listen to or buy *Humb*, the early version of *Mercury*, on the band's BandCamp page. Also on the page is a fairly comprehensive story of the album. All proceeds from the sale of the albums on the band's site go to charity.

XRA Records

After being quiet for a while, Crossroads of America Records has three new vinyl releases coming out:

- Bro. Stephen – Patrons of the Arts 7"
- Alexander the Great – Native Tongues 7"
- Candy Claws + Mike Adams At His Honest Weight – Sing Starflyer 59 Split 10" (SF59 Tribute)

More details about each release can be found on the XRA News Page.

Lust Control

A blurb in the newest issue of Heaven's Metal indicates that Lust Control is actually recording a new ep for release on CD and vinyl. The only announced title is "Finger" – their heaviest song ever. Will all the time that has passed since they broke up result in a kinder, gentler Lust Control? Will they go all trendy and wimpy on us? Yeah... probably not. Whatever they put out, it will probably be fun.

Bill Mason Band

"Most Christian Music was 6 years behind secular music, the BMB were only 6 months!" Born Twice Records has re-issued the classic 1979 album *No Sham!* by The Bill Mason Band. The album has been re-mastered and you can read the review in this issue.

Theo Obrastoff

Theo Obrastoff has released *Even Though I Walk – a Christmas Rock Opera*. Want to listen to samples or hear Theo himself talk more about this project? Head over to the Basement Tapes to listen to the Theo episode featuring this new album.

Josh Dooley / Map

Josh Dooley announced the release of the *Loneliness is Dangerous* project, a full length ep that they have been working on since the release of *Speechless*. You can listen and download for free or pay what you like at the band's BandCamp page.

The Bloody Strummers

Check out The Bloody Strummers – a band consisting of Josh Lory and Matt Biggers. *Return of the Halcyon Days* is their debut album. If you're a fan of classic bands like The Rolling Stones, The Doors, The Kinks, Beatles, or newer bands such as The Black Keys, White Stripes, or Brian Jonestown Massacre, this is right up your alley! Mixed and Co-Produced by Masaki Liu. There is nothing like this in the CCM! Purchase today for only $9 from BandCamp!

I wanted to drop a note to our readers (if anyone ever reads this column) and let everyone know about advertising here at Down the Line. We do not sell advertising, I think part of the integrity of Down the Line is that we do not need to sell ad space to do anything, and therefore we never have to answer to anyone because of a money issue. However, we are going to start running some advertisements in these pages simply because we want to support these causes/organizations and we think that our readership might also be interested. Just to clarify though…we are not selling ad space and we will not turn this into an advert rag that you can't ever find articles in. Matt and I have talked about this a few times before, and I think it is cool to be able to do stuff for free. If you want to support the work we do there will be inexpensive ways in the very near future. (We just had our first run of t-shirts done)

What I would always appreciate most is for you guys to support the bands we cover. One of the drawbacks (in my opinion) to the digital age of music is that people go on bandcamp or all these other music sites, and they stream and listen to music for free, but they never support the artist with a purchase or donation. That is unfortunately just the way things are these days, and that doesn't even take into account all the file sharing that goes on. I'm not playing the moral police about what is or isn't right, I am saying that these artists should be compensated for their work. If you're going to listen then you should pay…fair is fair. Just the way the game is played at this point seems like the cards are stacked even higher against artists. The corporate greed is still prevalent and now more concentrated between fewer labels, and the means to make ends meet are tighter and tighter. In addition, there are so many avenues of output that the pool of good music is murky at best. There seems to be huge push of quantity over quality, which is another reason to support good music when you hear it.

So anyway, I'm sure everyone reading has heard it all before, but it is important. Look for exciting new stuff coming soon from Down the Line. We started a small label called Down the Line The Collective and we just released an eco-friendly packaging hard copy of Western Grace's Take Back the Scene album. It is inexpensive, $5 download and Josh is selling the hardcopy's himself, you can contact him through his Facebook page.
westerngrace.bandcamp.com
facebook.com/#!/profile.php?id=1410273633

The Choir

"An evening with Derri Daugherty & Steve Hindalong from The Choir – performing Chase The Kangaroo in its entirety plus fan favorites!

Amid the cookie-cutter concerts taking place night after night at cavernous venues across the country, something is happening. Some forward-thinking artists are finding a way to do things differently. The Choir's Steve Hindalong and Derri Daugherty are heading out this spring for a limited run of intimate concerts, providing a unique opportunity to experience live music in a fresh, new way. Performing at just 16 hand-picked locations, these Grammy nominated and critically-acclaimed musicians will offer an up-close-and-personal experience sure to delight and inspire.

The Choir will celebrate the release of their groundbreaking fan favorite album *Chase The Kangaroo* from 1987 (Yes, it's been 25 years!) by performing the record in its entirety at a very limited run of live shows in the U.S. this Spring. Following this special set, Derri and Steve will perform a second set that will feature songs from their brand new album (*The Loudest Sound Ever Heard*) which is set to be released April 10th along with fan favorites from their catalog.

Whether you're a long-time fan or new to The Choir, this pared down tour will remind you how live music was meant to stir souls.

For more infomration, contact Lisa Michaels lisamichaels@comcast.net"

SLIDE

To me, March 21, 2012 was so far away when SLIDE announced it as the release date for their debut CD nearly a year ago. But time flew and the new SLIDE album is about to be unleashed on the world. Trust me, this one is worth the wait. Tickets to the release party at Club 33 / Disneyland are sold out. But if you want to see them live, there are other opportunities. See the SLIDE live page for

dates (including one at the famous Whiskey a Go Go). And keep a look out for *Auto Tune Massacre*.

The 77s

Lo-Fidelity Records is pleased to announce the upcoming re-release of the classic 77s album, *Sticks And Stones*… Out of print since shortly after its original release, we will be offering the album in CD and digital format, available online and on tour in March 2012. Please stay tuned for further details in the coming weeks on the expanded track list for this classic album. In support of the release, Michael Roe and David Leonhardt are excited to again tour as 77s Unplugged where they will perform songs from *Sticks And Stones* and the extensive 77s catalog.

77s Unplugged is also pleased to be scheduled to play Cornerstone 2012. Lo-Fidelity Records will be releasing an expanded version of the classic 77s live album, *Echos O' Faith* in time for the festival. To celebrate the re-release and 20th anniversary of the original recording, some configuration of the original *Echos O' Faith* lineup will appear at the festival. 77s Unplugged is currently scheduled to play on the Gallery Stage on Wednesday, July 4th, at 9:35PM. Please stay tuned for updates regarding the Cornerstone performance.

Bill Mallonee

Bill Mallonee continues to release more music – see the story in this issue for updates on new projects and archive releases.

Velvet Blue Music

Velvet Blue Music has teamed up w/ two other labels: Spune and Tree Fall Sounds to release a series of 7"s this year. The first one up is from the Austin, TX based Gold Beach. It will be released digitally and as a limited edition 7" on 2/28. It will be 2 tracks on beautiful white vinyl, and a total of 6 tracks on the download card. The second 7" will be from Doug Burr, releasing 2 tracks on vinyl with 4 tracks on download card. velvetbluemusic.com

Even though I was not a huge fan of her style of music, I always recognized that Whitney Houston was very talented in the genre that she performed in. The death of any person is sad, but I think the circumstances surrounding her life and death make her death even more tragic.

What I am having a hard time understanding is the line of Christians that are coming out to question Houston's faith. The argument is that her inability to live a "clean" life proves that she never really believed, or maybe even that God doesn't exist.

So what does it take to prove that you really believe? I think John J. Thompson said it best in an editorial of *True Tunes* magazine years and years ago: "I cannot prove that anyone is a believer." Outward signs can be faked. Inward changes can sometimes take years and even decades before they change our outward actions.

I first became a Christian my senior year in high school. It was at least two years after that before I started seeing changes in the way I acted. There was a lot changing on the inside, but the outward shell was still locked. I am sure many people questioned whether I was really a believer at that point. In fact, I know they did, and their judgment proved to be wrong.

And I never had a drug or alcohol problem. Throw that in the mix? Who knows how many *decades* it would have been before I started looking like a Christian?

Many people that claim to be believers spoke at Houston's funeral, and they all testified that she "loved the Lord." Like all of us, she made mistakes and fell into sin. So where is the line that says "on this side, your sin is small enough for us to still count you as a believer; on that side, your sin is just too big and it means that you don't really believe"?

That is the crux of the issue – our sin does not change our belief. It is our belief that changes our sin… but there is nothing that says it has to be instantaneous, or long and drawn out for that matter. It is often that we all have both going on in our lives. There are things that we change quickly and things we struggle with for years and even decades.

So, I will choose to err on the side of grace and believe that no matter how flawed Houston was, she was a believer. If you want to err on the side of law and condemnation, that is your choice.

JIMMY A

Jimmy

Down the Line catches up with one of our favorite artists

Interview by Steve Ruff

Readers of our zine are surely familiar with Jimmy Abegg, but I don't know if most people realize his long standing contribution to some of the bands that we love and have grown up with. My introduction to Jimmy A. was when I purchased Charlie Peacock's *The Secret of Time* album back around 1990 and found that he was the guitarist on that record. Jimmy released his first solo album *Entertaining Angels* the following year in 1991 and I snatched that up immediately. Everything about *Entertaining Angels* was perfect to me, the music, the lyrics and the artwork for the album was one of my favorites. With tracks like "Contemplate the Emptiness", "Thin but Strong Cord" and "Passion of Creation", I knew that I had found a great record that spoke directly to me and who I was. After his solo release I started to find his back catalog of albums from Vector and *The West Coast Diaries* releases. This was before the internet, so finding out about artists and their work was not as easy a task.

What I didn't realize until much later was that Jimmy also played in the Scratch Band which was the precursor to The 77's, and after following his career for years he also became one of the core members of The Ragamuffin Band. Jimmy's involvement with the Ragamuffins clearly gave credence to work of Rich Mullins, and I think (for me) that is where Rich Mullins really began to separate himself from the CCM-ish scene and moved more towards being an artist with a really good band of musicians who were complex, unique and brought a resume of quality to the table. I am not a fan of what I call "the CCM-ish" side of Christian music, but when I say that I mean the business aspect, the religious aspect and the overall specifics of that entire genre. Rich Mullins was definitely at the top of that heap at one point, but he progressed into an artist that changed not only musically, but personally and professionally as well. I don't know if people realize that Rich Mullins was like a Mark Heard of the music world, where he ended up at his untimely passing was not where he began. I miss Rich Mullins… talking to Jimmy A. about his involvement with Rich was really cool, because I think Jimmy's work really helped the band to separate themselves from the shackles of the average and the expected.

This is a great interview with one of my favorite artists. Hopefully anyone reading this will be pleased to learn a little more history about one of what I would consider is one of music's too often overlooked guitarists and artists. Jimmy A. is still cranking out the good stuff whether it is painting, design, photography and music. There is new music on the horizon from him, and I know some of our readers will be excited to hear and learn about a project that he is involved with that is close to being completed. Dig in and enjoy!

Did you grow up in a musical household? How did you get started in music?

I was inspired by music at a very early age, but a great uncle of mine was a pretty renowned band leader. Because of that influence my mother signed me up for piano lessons when I was in elementary school, then I moved to the accordion believe it or not. Both of those were non-starters for me, but then when I saw the Beatles on TV, I saved up my money and bought a guitar. I spent the rest of my formative years learning how to play music. In high school I transferred what I knew from guitar to bass and played bass in some bands.

I was raised in Nebraska and moved to Denver when I was a sophomore in high school. My sophomore, junior and senior years which were between 70' and 73', I played in bands and got high and basically lived that no account life. Upon graduation I moved to Sacramento, and in route to moving I got saved in Southern California which really changed my life. I had been teaching guitar and bass lessons in Colorado and after moving to Sacramento I continued to do the same thing and moved kinda full throttle into music and ministry. That was the Jesus Movement era and the bands I was a part of were kind of the wolves in sheep's clothing… we would play fairs and get-togethers and then have the ulterior motive of trying to get people to come to a concert at church, a Sunday service or a youth group rally. Looking back on it; I was there for the music, I didn't really realize it but we were "selling soap".

You played in Vector back in the early 80's, around like 82' or 83' I think… but I know you also played in The Scratch Band before it became the 77's… how did that whole thing transpire?

I played bass with Mike in the very first Scratch Band, and I had played guitar with Steve Scott and was involved in some of the preliminary things that would launch into what would later be known as The 77's. By that time I was deeply entrenched with Steve Griffith of Vector and the guys were still assembling what would become the line-up for the 77's. Jan Eric Volz, who I worked closely with as well played bass… he was actually a guitar player but ended up playing bass with the 77's for a long time. I don't remember exactly when Jan split but he was there a good while. Have you ever interviewed Steve Scott?

No, but he is on my list to contact…

He's fascinating, he's an awesome guy. He's the literary Yoda of the whole Sacramento scene. He was born and

raised in London and moved here on the urging of Randy Stonehill, Larry Norman and maybe even Tom Howard. After his deal with Larry got off to a slow start he moved to Sacramento and became a part of Exit Records. We did multiple recordings with Steve, he's a great guy. He's definitely esoteric, kind of like the Tom Waits of the Exit crowd; he's real involved in the arts and speaking engagements.

My introduction to you was playing guitar for Charlie Peacock on *Secret of Time* and then my next purchase was you're *Entertaining Angels* which is still one of my favorite albums from the time period. I loved everything about it. Not only were the music and the lyrics great, but the artwork was awesome!

Thanks. That's a fun one because it still holds up well after all these years. Many records end up just sounding trendy and goofy, whereas that one still sounds semi relevant.

Any chance that *Entertaining Angels* could ever see a re-release?

I don't see why not, maybe that is something I should look into doing in the next year or so, I think that release still has teeth in it.

You've been working pretty closely with the Lost Dogs at this point, correct?

Yeah a couple of years ago I went on the Route 66 trip. I shot that for them and we had a great time, but it was too short of a time really. I think we had 10 or 12 days and we needed a whole week more to get everything, so the guys went back out last year to try and get the stuff that we missed. I was unable to go on that one, but I've known all these guys for decades. Mike and I have played together on and off for years obviously. Terry is a relatively newer friend although I had met him, played with him and shared a few gigs with him, but until recently I had just never really had that chance to spend more than a few minutes with him. It was really fun to get to hang with Terry and be a part of The Lost Dogs efforts, I think they're awesome.

How did you find your way into the Ragamuffin Band? Were you already friends with Rich Mullins?

I was friends with someone who knew him. My friends name was Paul Emery, he actually managed The Choir for a little while and he was managing Margaret Becker at the time. I had played on Margaret's first album *Immigrant's Daughter*. I played guitar on her album and had met these people who were working with Margaret. Around that time we first moved to Nashville and I got the opportunity to make my first solo record and so I became friends with this guy who very close to Gay Quisenberry who managed Rich. They were about to head out on this big three month tour and they needed a bass player and an opening act. Paul suggested that I join that circus, so we went to Atlanta and saw Rich play and I was really impressed with Rich. I wasn't really sure what I was getting into, but I accepted the offer to play in Rich's band in exchange for a 30 minute opening slot. Much to my surprise Rich would actually open the show, and then he would have the opening act come out in the middle. He liked to promote the acts that he liked and that was my first experience running a band because in the middle when I came out, his band would switch and play back up on my material.

My relationship with Rich just evolved from there and we became quite close friends. He was just about to start a record called *A Liturgy, A Legacy and a Ragamuffin Band*, and he invited me to be a part of that which is where I met Rick Elias and Billy Crockett. Some of the other guys, like Chris McHugh, I already knew or had played with. We made the *Liturgy* record which I think is a really good record, and then I spent the next few years supporting Rich and his music. I also did my second solo album *Secrets* as well as the *Temptation* record by Vector during those same years.

I guess I was just in the right place at the right time in regards to meeting Rich and being available. We had really good times then and it came at the right time for Rich because he was looking for a higher quality of musicianship as well I think. So *Liturgy* was more like Rich's attempt to put together that quality of music that he thought was better and I think we made a substantial contribution to Christian music with a really good album.

I think it was a great record as well... Rich Mullins was one of those artists that early on was a little more established on the CCM side of the tracks, but his music always spoke deeply to me and he seemed like such a genuine guy as well. I saw him in concert numerous times and he was one of those guys that I would always take the time to see when he came through town. He had a certain way about him (sincerity) that spoke on a deeper level and he also introduced me to Brennan Manning's *Ragamuffin Gospel* which was a life altering book for me. The Jesus Record was a great album and you guys also released an album as The Ragamuffin Band after Mullins passed away correct?

What happened was that Chris McHugh couldn't do the *Liturgy* support tour, so I invited Aaron Smith to join on drums, and a guy named **Daniel** O'Lannerghty that played bass on the *Liturgy* record couldn't do the tour either, so Rick invited Mark Robertson in and the four of us really made the core of that group. After Rich passed we did the *Jesus Record* and then made a flawed but interesting record *Prayers of a Ragamuffin*. That was an interesting time because I think if we had had the benefit of not being associated with the CCM world than other things might

have happened for us. We really had a vision for something but we were under the influence of the Christian radio scene, and I just think that we could have had a much better record if we hadn't been trying to get on the radio and really having to kind of have the record company tell us what we were up to. Anyway, I got in about 7 good years with Rich, he was a good guy… he really was amazing.

Are you involved in with the movie that is about Rich's life?

No, I've been in touch with those guys and I've met with them a couple of times to just talk about it and offer limited support. I'm not really quite sure yet exactly what they're doing so I'm one of the more cautious participants because I want to see how they're telling the story before I sign up for much more than just a source of encouragement. I certainly encouraged them to do what they felt they wanted to do.

You know, from my point of view with that, Rich was certainly a lot of things besides just his public persona. I kind of put this in the same boat as someone from a Christian tradition… let's say someone like Saint Francis of Assisi. There's probably been about a dozen books written about that guy, and they're all different, and they all bring their own agenda to the table. With Rich I think he's someone that people will write about for a long time and not necessarily have the straight shot available to them. In my case I feel like I knew a side of Rich that was unique and varied beyond just the evangelical right wing version that we hear. I think they might have a hard time figuring out how to portray that, but I certainly don't see any harm in it. I hope they do it justice because Rich's personality was huge.

Any chance that you, Rick and Mark might do something again in the future?

Yeah, we actually have plans and we meet periodically to talk about it. I think there's reason to expect something in the next year or so. Rick is very motivated and I talk to him frequently, Mark is very busy with a band called The Legendary Shack Shakers, he's pretty tied up but I think he would carve out the time to do something with this for sure. We've also been working with a guy locally, a neighbor of mine Matt Slocum, (Love Coma, Sixpence None The Richer) and he plays a bunch of instruments and he's also been playing with us so we'll see what develops.

You are a painter, photographer and artist as well as a musician, is that your primary "day job"?

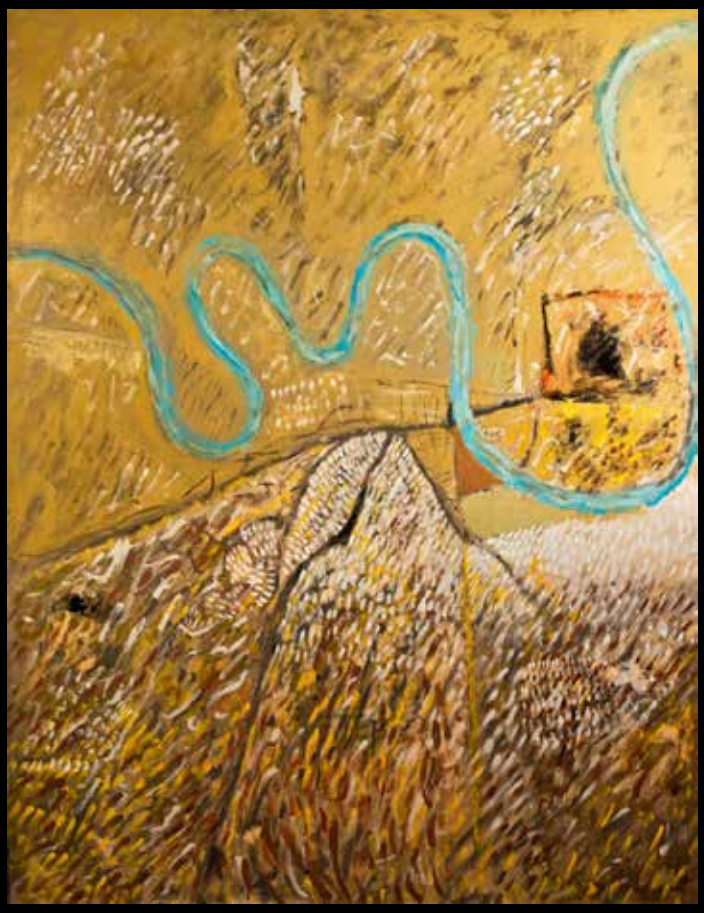
I do photography and videos and I do a lot of CD packaging. I'm a designer so much of the time what I do is an indie artist will come in and want photography, so I'll design a package for them and do the support materials for the promotion and marketing. I'm in a couple of galleries so my fine art I sell all throughout the year to people locally. My goal is to be in several different galleries and hopefully sell some stuff so that I can make ends meet through my art, photography and film.

This last couple of years has been pretty unique because I'm working on a solo record as well as a project with 3 friends. John Painter is a guitar-based musician and engineer, extraordinary guy, he had a band called Fleming and John at one point, of course I'm sure you know who Steve Taylor is, and Peter Furler who was the drummer in the Newsboys. Peter, Steve, John and I started a band together about two years ago, and we're almost done with twelve tracks. Steve is doing the movie "Blue Like Jazz" and that kind of slowed us for a bit because we were just about done with the album and then the funding for the movie started coming in. That was probably about 12 months ago, and then around the same time Peter signed a solo deal for an album with EMI. So John and I have been waiting to get it all finished, and we're all actually getting together next week to talk about how we can get this wrapped up this year. This is a very exciting thing because we have a very relevant and exciting albums worth of material. It's a 3 piece with a vocalist, and it's really cool! Steve is on vocals, I'm playing guitar, John is on bass and Peter is on drums. No name yet, so far we're just calling it The Secret Band…

Do you do commission work?

I do! I do commission work throughout the year, there is always an open door for that. They can contact me through my website; I will be updating my website to incorporate all of the galleries where I am featured as well. I hope to do that soon. I put a website together years ago and haven't touched it since, but I will be working on getting that going in the near future. I'm always up for whatever is coming! There is a lot of good stuff happening right now.

jimmyabegg.com
facebook.com/jimmy.abegg
cargocollective.com/jimmyabegg/
twitter.com/jimmy_abegg



JOSH LORY

...TALKING ABOUT LIFESAVERS, THE BLOODY STRUMMERS, WESTERN GRACE, DESTROY NATE ALLEN AND THE MICHAEL KNOTT TRIBUTE...

By Steve Ruff

Down the Line has been quite pleased to have Josh Lory as a contributing writer ever since we kicked off a few years ago. Josh routinely delivers excellent interviews and reviews on various albums that span the broad taste of his music knowledge. Josh has also been interviewed about his band Western Grace in an earlier issue, as well as contributing to interviews about one of the other bands he plays in, LS Underground. We thought because he has so many pans in the fire that we would again catch up with him about a bunch of stuff he is working on. There is some exciting LS Underground news soon to come, but below we cover what's new with Western Grace, find out about his latest release as a project called The Bloody Strummers (which is awesome), the work he is doing on Destroy Nate Allen, the updates on Lifesavers (yep, he's in that too) and a tribute album that promises to be one of the best that has ever been put together! Josh is a busy dude for sure! Catch up on all the cool stuff and help support this music! It really is top notch and great quality, it's unique and thought provoking, and it is inexpensive and helps to continue to support independent artists!

LIFESAVERS

How is the recording shaping up and how far along do you estimate things are?

At this point in time, Knott has two songs to finish vocals on. We had a bit of a delay with Mike's health and needing to heal, but he's ready to go and finish it now. After that Cliffy drops his guitar parts on there then it's off to Masaki to mix and back to Cliffy to master.

How would you describe this release musically in contrast to other Lifesavers recordings?

This album is, to me, a combo of all the Lifesavors and Lifesavers recordings. There are elements of *Us Kids* and *Dream Life*, a little of *Kiss Of Life*, *Huntington Beach* and *Poplife*. This new one really brings it all together.

Is there an overall theme lyrically or are things just kinda different with each song?

It's not a concept album; it's different for each song really. They're either spiritual songs, about addiction, and some are just fun.

You guys used Kickstarter to fund this project, how was that experience?

Honestly a little stressful and could have gone better. I'm so grateful to all those that donated though, it couldn't have happened without them! I'd like to try it again with more support in the promotion area, I dropped the ball not being on Facebook back then and I should have pushed harder to get Mike on board.

Who are all the players going to be on this one?

Knott on vocals, me on bass, Nick White on drums, and Cliffy on guitar! It would be a stellar live band if it happened!

What has it been like for you to be an integral part of working with Knott?

An amazing experience all around. To come from being a fan, to co-writing songs, and then being a good friend. A little bro-mantic I suppose J

Any chance/plans to play shows behind this release?

I would love it, but a promoter would need to be involved and want to show some interest. I think Lifesavers and The Altar Billies would be an amazing show, somewhere down in SoCal (hint, hint, promoters!)

[Soul Device – circa 1998]

THE BLOODY STRUMMERS

How long did it take for you and Matt Biggers to do this album?

Three years, way too long, but the end result was way worth it!

Who are all the players on here and where did you guys record this?

I played drums, bass, acoustic and electric guitar, percussion, and harmonica. Matt Biggers sang, played some lead guitars, and some synths. I recorded all my parts at my home studio, and Matt did some of his vocals at Nu-Tone studio in Pittsburg, Ca, and the rest of his stuff at home. We mixed and mastered it with Masaki Liu at One Way Studio in Benicia, Ca. Masaki added a lot of great stuff to the album and really brought it to the next level which he always does. Everyone involved added their own touch to it production wise.

Can you tell us who influenced you musically on this record?

My influences were a lot of garage rock and psychedelic pop, older Rolling Stones albums, The Beatles, The Kinks, Beach Boys, Chocolate Watchband, The Doors, early Starflyer 59, Brian Jonestown Massacre, Black Rebel Motorcycle Club, White Stripes, and The Black Keys. Matt has plenty of others I didn't list.

Lyrically who wrote most of these songs and what do they deal with thematically?

Matt wrote the majority in the end, I sent some ideas to him for a few and he rolled with those and added his own element to it. Matt's a good lyricist. Thematically the songs are about many aspects of life, love, looming death, spiritual and physical revolution, time passing, paranoia, mans arrogance and good and evil.

You guys have the bandcamp page, but there are plans underway for a hard copy release as well correct?

I'm hoping to release it on disc from the Down the Line Collective. (Ed. Note J)

This is a really solid release, any chance of shopping this around to any larger labels?

That's a little tough to sell a band when they don't play live. I would be stoked for someone like Velvet Blue to pick it up.

You and Matt live pretty far apart, are there plans to collaborate again in the future, or are there long term goals with Bloody Strummers?

We'll see what the Lord has in store, if the inspiration hits I'd love to do more albums.

WESTERN GRACE

Where can people go to purchase this album?

http://westerngrace.bandcamp.com Only $5! I'm getting a little self-conscious, haven't sold 1 yet....

Western Grace is such a fun album, any plans to continue

on and make another record?

I had a second album underway but decided to go with a different singer, its more Americana influenced Punk, and we plan on releasing a few 7" records and digital EP's hopefully this year and next. That band is called Patriots of the Wasteland. I will do another Western Grace within the next couple of years. I go back and forth on what project to put the most focus on and I'm sure it drives the people I work with crazy, but WG is the easiest thing to focus on and record with the ever changing life because it's my thing and I get to play/record with Nick White. I've got my daughter, school, wife, and a new baby on the way that I give most of my time to. Collaborating with other artist seems to get tougher and tougher these days with scheduling, distance and life in general. I was going to get a live band going with the Strummers, but don't have the time or energy to put into that, I'm not a young man anymore.

In the liner notes of the record you thank several different people, among them you thank the Gnostic scriptures...can you tell us a bit more about the Gnostic Scriptures and Gnostic Christianity?

The Gnostic Gospels are a group of ancient text that the Catholic Church didn't find relevant for us to know about, and then the Protestant Church cut 5 books out of the Catholic Bible, so I personally find them to be a more complete book when put together. I find it odd that the Bible by many people is viewed as having one author and not many. To me the Bible is man's words inspired by God and not God's word period. No man should be allowed to put these limitations upon us, for we are all equal in the eyes of God. gnosticchristianity.com puts it best "Gnostic Christianity teaches a non-judgmental "process" of reasoning. This new process, is justified by a natural principle that Jesus revealed and contemporary physics demonstrates is a scientific fact. Combining non-judgmental reasoning with the current judgmental process expands our consciousness of reality. In this enlightened consciousness we are personally empowered to resolve all problems and as Paul said "live the good life as from the beginning He [God] had meant us to live it." (Eph 2:10)"

Am I a Gnostic? Sort of but I take no claim to any religion. To quote Bono from Zooropa "And I have no religion, and I don't know what's what, and I don't know the limit, the limit of what we've got" and The Choir "The word inside the word is Love"

The back panel picture is of you and your daughter Prudence, how has it been for you becoming a father?

The greatest thing that has ever happened to me! Being Dad is the most important thing to me, just under God that is, but it all ties in together and I'm a better person because of her.

DESTROY NATE ALLEN

Who are Destroy Nate Allen?

Destroy Nate Allen are a husband and wife band consisting of Nate and Tessa Allen and they are super awesome people! Some of the best house guests we've ever had. They play acoustic based Folk Punk and are very DIY.

How did you get involved working with them, and how long have you known them?

I downloaded all their albums off Bandcamp! All their releases are pay what you want, I got 'em and became a big fan. I think Nate has something very pure in his writing, and then I wrote them and asked if they ever wanted to record with me that I would do it free of charge. They took me up on it (due to some name dropping on my part). I've personally known them for about 6 months give or take a little.

What exactly is your involvement and what are you doing on this release?

Well it started out that what we recorded would be their new album, then their friend's band Gnarboots asked if they wanted to rerecord the album with a full band at a bigger studio. We had plans to add drums and bass to what we recorded anyway and that is still going to happen. Now, basically two albums will be released, the one I recorded as a more stripped down version of the other, if that makes sense. Nate could clear it up I'm sure.

Is there a working title on this upcoming album?

I'll interview Nate for a future issue to find some of this out, as of now, I'm not sure.

Are you playing on this release as well?

I was, and then I wasn't; now I am again... snare drum and acoustic bass, to give it that early Violent Femmes kind of vibe. I'll be finishing that up within the next couple of months.

Did they get all the funding that they needed through Kickstarter? If not is there still a place where people can donate?

They reached their Kickstarter goal, but you can still donate at www.destroynateallen.com at anytime, there is a donate option to click on.

Where can we go to find out more about DNA and keep up with the progress?

www.destroynateallen.com

Is this release going to see a digital and hardcopy release?

I'm guessing the album we did will at least be in digital form, for a time I wasn't sure if it would see the light of day since they're redoing a bunch of it at a bigger studio. The Kickstarter page can clarify this better:

http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/439147637/destroy-nate-allens-epic-album-adventure

KNOTT TRIBUTE ALBUM

Can you list all the contributors?

01) Kitty - Destroy Nate Allen
02) Shine A Light or The Bomb - Zin Uru
03) It's A Crazy Thing and I Can't Wait - Mike Indest
04) Miss America (may change) - Western Grace
05) Blame - The Bloody Strummers
06) Am I Winning Something - The Radiant Dregs
07) Grace - Hidden From Blackout
08) I Am No Christ - Paravell
09) Not A Cuss Word - The Straighters
10) Denial - Eddie P
11) [undecided song] - Mike Roe (unconfirmed)
12) [undecided song] - Derri Daugherty
13) [undecided song] - Blaster The Rocket Man
14) Rocket and a Bomb - Joel Kircher
15) Comatose Soul (may change) - Bill Campbell
16) Never Forsaken - B-Attitudes
17) Rags Again - Erik Kyle Lyday
18) Wakin' Up The Dead - Armchair Prophets
19) Free Her - Mikee Bridges
20) Halo or Tattoo - Dormant Ember
21) Shoe Gazer - While Rome Is Burning
22) Somewhere - A Monster Named Hugo
23) Movie Star - Thrift Store Heroes
24) John Barrymore Jr. - Jesse Sprinkle

Any specific parameters in the type of songs that are being covered?

As long as Knott wrote it, it doesn't matter what you pick.

If people still want to get in how do they contact you?

Look me up on FB, or josh.lory@gmail.com

This is such a great idea and one that is long overdue, how did this all come together?

You sort of answered that with "long overdue", something I'd been waiting for a long time, so I decided to get it going on my own.

This one will be digital as well as hardcopy correct?

I'm hoping... it's looking like a 2 disc hard copy thing.

What do you want people to know that we haven't already covered here?

Ummm...worship God in your prayers, read Down The Line Zine, support the indie artist, buy my albums, love each other, forgive each other, care about the environment, sponsor a child, "am I buggin' ya, I don't mean to bug ya" - again with the Bono

Jason Dunn

FACEDOWN RECORDS

Interview by Steve Ruff

I am super excited to be able to do a brief interview with Jason Dunn. For those of you who don't know who Jason is, we are pleased to introduce you. Jason is the owner of Facedown Records which is THE place to get the best hardcore/straightedge music in the Christian market. With an unwavering commitment to DIY ethics and a solid line up of artists, Facedown has been bringing the best in hardcore to the community for well over a decade now. A couple of the things that are awesome about the label (besides great music) is that Dave Quiggle is the art director, but also these guys have stayed true to the spirit of the hardcore/punk scene with a quality output that is super reasonably priced. It is just about impossible these days to find any other place to get $10 CD's and $12 t-shirts! Some of the best bands in the genre come from Facedown as well. Some of the finest bands around were a part of the family back in the day, bands like No Innocent Victim, xDisciplex AD, Hanover Saints, Thieves and Liars and Symphony in Peril once called Facedown home. The roster continues to crush to date with some of my favorite acts around including War of Ages, Saving Grace, Onward to Olympas and A Hope for Home. Check this label out if you are into hard music, it truly is the best around!

When did you start Facedown Records?
Facedown started as a distro through mail-order and at shows in 1997. I announced Facedown Records in 1997 and our first release came out in early 1998.

When was the first Facedown Fest?
2000. We uploaded a bunch of the old Facedown fest posters and fliers on our Facebook for people to check out, that can be seen here:

http://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.10150151134085832.336580.12816120831&type=3

I know you played in NIV, any other bands you were/are a part of?
I joined NIV when I was 17. Before that I was in a San Diego hardcore band called Built to Last. I did some projects here and there, but NIV was always the main focus. Dodgin' Bullets was a fun side project that some of us NIV guys did with guys from xDisciplex AD and Shockwave. We put out a couple of EPs on Facedown in the early days of the label.

Hardcore has come from the underground and relative obscurity and exploded on the national level. With that type of exposure comes the watering down of the scene and/or the message...what does hardcore mean to you and what are you trying to convey to today's kids?
I was exposed to hardcore in my early teens when I heard bands like Sick of It all, Judge and Agnostic Front. I instantly felt connected to all of those old New York bands and it definitely shaped me into who I am today. I always said that Judge got me through high school! All my friends would party and drink and I was just never interested in that, and I know a lot of the reason is because of the lyrics and message of that band. As far as hardcore getting bigger, it did get watered down in a lot of ways, but it's also good that there is more exposure to it than before. Sure there are some negative effects that come along with that exposure, but there still are bold bands out there today that speak and play with conviction and the impact they can make on the lives of teenagers and young fans can be very powerful!

Besides the Facedown and Strikefirst roster, who are some bands that you are excited about?
I listen to a wide variety of music on most days. Some of my favorite bands or artists that are always on rotation here are Thrice, Coldplay, Loreena McKennit, Within Temptation, Florence + The Machine, ISIS, In Flames, and many more. I think that short list alone shows quite a bit of diversity, hah!

What is on your iPod/cd player/record player right now?
Besides the list of bands I mentioned above, I've really been enjoying O'Brother's newest album *Garden Window*. I just recently picked it up and have been listening to it like crazy! Also, we just got in some great new upcoming facedown releases for War of Ages, The Burial and Leaders, so I've been playing those quite a bit too. All three of those are incredible albums!

Anything that you would like to say?
I'm thankful everyday for the opportunity to do what I do. God has blessed us with amazing bands and incredible people that support those bands and make this all possible. There's always a lot of talk about music piracy these days from anyone involved in the industry but I would rather just take the time to thank the people that do support us and our bands financially. It keeps us going!

facedownrecords.com
facebook.com/facedownrecordsinc

VINYL REMAINS

PUNK, METAL, & HARDCORE VINYL

Kevin Burke is bringing it back!!!

Interview by Steve Ruff

Kevin Burke is my age, the ripe old fallin' apart age of 37 J He's married, lives in Wisconsin and has two daughters. He also has the best job in the world, or I would think it is! Of course we all wish we could make more money for what we do – we probably all feel we are underpaid to some degree – but as far as just straight up cool jobs, Kevin holds the reigns to that. I think I first heard about him when his company, Vinyl Remains, decided to rerelease The Huntington's *Sweet Sixteen* and *Fun and Games* on vinyl. I thought that was pretty cool, and while I still need to snag those records from him, I have bought several others in his catalog. Some of the awesome things about Vinyl Remains that make them so fun is not only that everything is pressed to vinyl, but there are some pretty awesome colors of wax available as well! The music is all heavy metal, horror rock, punk and hardcore.

What really makes this a great company and one that we should all support is that Kevin has built Vinyl Remains from the ground up, and he is 100% independent of any corporate monies and any corporate rules about who he can or can't support. This is the real deal: a company that loves and respects music and the art that is created, and in return they collaborate straight with the artists themselves. Swing on over to the website when you finish this article, find them on facebook and become their friend, and please, above all, tell all your friends about Vinyl Remains!

(Keep your eyes open too…The Crucified box set on vinyl is coming)!!!

How did Vinyl Remains come to fruition?

It's been a dream of mine for years to start a record label. As a fanatic vinyl collector, I was always disappointed that most of my favorite Christian artists didn't release much of anything on vinyl. So, instead of waiting for someone else to release the titles I've always wanted to see on vinyl, I figured I'd just try and do it myself!

Is this a completely indie operation for you?

Absolutely! I've got no ties to any major labels, and I like it that way! I've recently partnered with another like-minded label owner (Jesse from Colorado based Veritas Vinyl). It's been such a blessing to find another label that has the same ideas and goals as I do, not to mention the same great taste in music that I have! HAHA. We plan on co-releasing a bunch of great stuff in the future, and have already released The Crucified's *Pillars of Humanity* on vinyl.

What is your profession or what do you do for a living?

Believe it or not I'm a professional record collector! At least that's what I'd call it. I've been a fanatic collector of vinyl, cd's, etc, for many years, and I'd always fund my hobby by selling rare records or cd's that I found for cheap, and sell them on eBay or Amazon for a profit. I realized if I had enough time to travel a bit and hit up as many record stores as possible, I'd probably be able to make a living doing it (and expand my record collection at the same time!). Up until 2010, I owned a UPS store franchise, and after the economy took a nosedive, so did my business. I wasn't able to pay myself one cent from the store, so I did a "dry run" so to speak, and for two years the only income I had was from scavenging used cd and record stores hoping to turn up a rarity or two. I realized that this crazy idea just might work, so when I sold the store and paid off all my business debts, I dedicated myself to doing it full time. Now, I'm certainly not making a bunch of money doing it, but it pays the bills, and I absolutely love doing it. My wife has been totally supportive of me doing this as well, and that really helps!

Given that you love hardcore/punk/metal, who are some of your favorite bands from past and present?

Wow, I could probably give you a list of several hundred bands! I listen to mostly punk/hardcore and metal, but pretty much listen to the entire

musical spectrum those genres cover, everything from pop-punk to grindcore. If I had to narrow down the list to just a handful of bands, it would have to include The Crucified, Scaterd Few, Ramones, Misfits, Descendents, Napalm Death, Tourniquet, The Huntington's, Entombed, Social Distortion, Black Flag, Grave Robber, Black Sabbath, Dropdead, Spazz, Motorhead, Bad Brains, etc.

Out of those favorite bands, what are your favorite releases by them and why?

Well, my favorite album of all time is the Crucified's self titled album. From the moment I first heard it over 20 years ago it became an instant favorite of mine. That's also the first album I ever owned on vinyl! The Crucified - Pillars of Humanity is another favorite, and it was absolutely amazing for Veritas Vinyl and my own label to release that on vinyl. That's one of the most rewarding things about running a label. I really can't even describe the feeling of holding one of your all-time favorite albums in your hands and realizing that you had a hand in putting it out on vinyl!

Some other all time favorite albums would have to be:

Scaterd Few – *Sin Disease*, what an incredible album this is! So unique, memorable, Omar's incredible fretless bass, Allan's one of kind voice, just a phenomenal album!

Ramones – I'd go with *Mania*, but I could have honestly picked any of their 1970's-80's albums. They were the first punk band I ever heard, and I instantly loved them. Punk as we know it would not be the same had it not been for them.

Why did you decide to start a vinyl label as opposed to something else?

Well, I've been a vinyl collector/fan for years, so it was a pretty obvious choice to start making vinyl. Not to say that I hate cd's, in fact, some of the upcoming releasing that Veritas Vinyl and I will be collaborating on will definitely be available on cd. It will look a bit strange to see a cd with two record label logos both containing the word "VINYL" in them though! HAHAHA

There has been a semi recent surge in the interest of vinyl, do you think that will have staying power or do you see that tide shifting again?

I don't think vinyl sales will continue to see the huge increases they have seen in recent years. It's definitely a trend. It will shift back to the way it was 10-15 years ago I think, where very few major label bands saw their albums released on vinyl. The underground punk and metal bands/labels never stopped making vinyl once the cd took over in the late 80's/early 90's, and I don't see that changing now that digital music is now the format of choice. It's definitely a niche market, but it's a market that will always be there. There will always be a small amount of fans that prefer the look, sound, and feel of vinyl to digital. I think that the CD will eventually be pushed out almost entirely by digital, and it will only be the small independent record labels making music available on any sort of physical format. That's sad really.

How do you decide which band you are going to release, and how do you pick which album from that band? Is that a 'band decision' or your decision?

Well, in most cases I contact bands I want to work with; in some cases bands have approached me. It's always a joint decision as to what to release. I always make sure the band has a say in every step of the process, from the art/layout, inserts, even the color of vinyl. It's really important for me that the band is happy with the final product, and of course that they actually get paid for it! You always hear horror stories about bands being ripped off or lied to by record labels, even Christian ones. I've always been completely open and honest with every band I've ever worked with, and I always will be.

What has been the response to what you have released so far?

I've been very happy with the response so far! I've sold enough copies of what I've released to keep pressing new titles, and really, that's my ultimate goal. I just want to keep on pressing vinyl! There are dozens and dozens of things I'd love to press on vinyl, but obviously lack of money to do it is the biggest problem. I knew that initially things would be tough, and growing the label would be a slow process, me being a new label and all. It was possible that I wouldn't even be able to make a go of it after my first couple of releases. Really, I had no idea if anyone would buy them at all! I've been very blessed though, and I've also had a lot of help with distribution from a lot of the underground Christian distros, and even some secular ones. I'm very excited to see what the future brings! If it's God's will, I'll keep doing this as long as I can!

THEO OBRASTOFF

Come As a Child…Or Not At All

By Steve Ruff

I owe Theo Obrastoff an apology… Theo unfortunately got tangled up in the wheels of my horrible planning and timing. We actually did this interview in the summer of last year, and then we decided to hold it until November/December and release it in conjunction with his Basement Tapes episode. Seeing as how the New Year turned and you are just now reading this shows how far behind I allowed things to get. If only I could devote all my time to DTL, that would be nice! Anyway, back to Theo and what is important…

I was a late-comer to Theo and his work. I had seen from time to time an online reference to an album called *Come as a Child (or Not At All)*, but I had never been able to find a copy to my dismay. All of my favorite artists are on there – a who's who in the music world: Theo, Terry Taylor, Michael Knott, Riki Michele, Derri Daugherty, Michael Roe and many others as well. I got an email from Mike Indest (who does the DTL Basement Tapes) that said "You need to interview Theo Obrastoff, the anniversary of Andy is coming up soon." To be honest, I wasn't sure who Theo or Andy was, but as soon as I contacted Theo he filled me in on the entire story. Theo lost his son Andy in 2001 due to complications from a lung & heart transplant. So, for me, there was this desire to talk to Theo about his music, but I found out so much more about his journey that he and his family have gone through. It is inspiring.

Theo sent me a book he had written, *The Father Loves the Son*, as well as several solo CD's he has recorded. In addition he sent me *Suffer the Children* and the follow up *Come As a Child (or Not At All)*… I was surprised at his generosity, and I was excited to get the book and all the music… There is an important story here, one that is not only important because of the magnitude of what happened and how Theo and his family (as well as countless others) were affected, but it is important as well because the parallel between Theo and his son Andy are a mirror to how Father God feels about each of those that belong to Him. I think there is an expression of how much He loves every single soul that He created.

This is a story of complexities, it is a story of tragedy and triumph, and it is a story that is about the resilience of a child's spirit. There is a reason why scripture talks about children so much; there is a reason why unless we become like them we will not see the Kingdom. C.S. Lewis said it best, he said, "When I was a child I spoke as a child, when I became an adult I put away childish things, like the desire to be grown up." Theo's story about the journey of his son is life changing, and it spoke deeply to me even though I do not have children. I hope that you will take this journey and learn about Theo and his music, but I hope you will take it a step further and learn from Theo about what he has experienced in dealing with Andy's cystic fibrosis, and ultimately learning how to give his son back to the Creator. It is quite a journey.

Can you tell us just a bit about yourself?

I live with my wife and our youngest son (12) in Mill Creek (a city just 20 miles north of Seattle). My elder son (24) is living in Wisconsin and is with the Army.

What bands have you played with and been involved with musically?

In the early 80s I played a great deal with a "best in the NW" band called The Want. We did covers and a great deal of original music. I played bass for The Want and sang back up. Later I played in bands where I could play guitar and focus more upon my own compositions. There was "Philippi Co. Jail" and "The Jordan River Project" and finally "Flip Side." Then there was the time I played a great deal of acoustic solo music as I was blessed with the unique adventure of trouncing about from Cornerstone to Vancouver BC, riding the coattails of The Lost Dogs (they used to play the big rooms).

What is your "day time" job?

Presently I am a housewife… err… husband… and I am also a full time student with Walden University, getting my MS in Mental Health Counseling. Before that I pastured for quite a long while.

Can you tell me the order of the stuff you have released? When did what CD come out, and where was the book released in the order of things?

Come as a Child was still in the grinder, so at my first C-Stone, we released my book (*The Father Loves the Son*) and a "single" CD with the same name which featured two songs. One was "Andrie," a love song to my late son Andrew. The "flip side" has a new recording of the Dogs singing "Lord, Protect My Child."

How/when did you meet Terry Taylor and how did the friendship that you guys have develop?

Terry received a request to come to Seattle and sing over a little boy who was dying due to Cystic Fibrosis (CF). God moved him to act upon the request and it was only a matter of days before he appeared on the fifth floor of Children's Hospital of Seattle. He sang and prayed over Andrew. He spoke with Andrew. We spoke. He asked if we might stay in touch and I was really quite moved by his offer of friendship. A few months after Andrew passed away (May 5th 2001), I approached Terry about doing some sort of memorial for Andrew; something that focused upon father/son relationships and a bit of education about CF as well. It's a long story, filled with ups, downs, tears, laughter (such as I had never experienced before), and an entirely new host of friends (brothers and sisters) than I had ever imagined possible.

How did you meet John Piccari?

The first Andy's Angels Christmas Concert had taken place here in Washington State with Terry, Mike Roe, Aaron Sprinkle, and me. It was taped through the board as well as on video. We decided to help the project get started, to announce our intentions for the project (this would be December 2001), and just celebrate what was happening. Following the gig, I posted on the DA website a request for anybody who might be able to master the CDs for me. Piccari stepped right up to the plate and so did Rob Marnocha (sp? who packaged the two disc set). There were about 50 collector's sets that were sold at around $50 each. Then I saw John at C-Stone (funny story). Then I went to So Cal, dropped off the tracks from my first Christmas album with Robert Watson, stayed with John, performed a Sunday morning deal with Jeff Elbel at John's church, then joined the Dogs on the road and then swung back through So Cal to mix the Christmas album with Watson before returning home to the Seattle area. Trips to So Cal became frequent. My two best friends, Rich Brimer (Andrew introduced us in person in WA), and John Piccari (Andrew introduced us too, but it was after he had gone to heaven—if you catch my meaning). John is just this wonderful brother and I can't really find better words than that.

Can you tell me Andy's birthday, and the date that he passed away?

Andrew was born September 30th 1985 and he ascended to God on May 5th 2001 due to complications with a double-lung/heart transplant he received when nearly 10 years old.

Prior to Andrew having CF, was it something that you ever had any knowledge of or experience with?

No... Not at all. We were called down to the hospital in the middle of the night for a conference. The staff told us that Andrew was diagnosed with Cystic Fibrosis. There was this long, terrible silence. Our minds swirled and we had no idea what *Cys)UR)U Fibr)IUERJsis* or whatever was. It just sounded malevolent. Finally I broke the silence and asked, "Does this affect his life expectancy?" A straightforward "yes" came back at me. Then we wept because we inherently knew that something really awful had been pronounced over our baby, and life was never going to be the same. We wept because we are simple creatures of little understanding, and how to care for one of God's angels (meaning kids with CF, with down syndrome, with autism, etc) is a thing too lofty for us to absorb. One just has to nod in acknowledgment and ask, "What do we do?"

In the beginning of your book, one of the things that really struck me was where you said that, "As I've striven to deal with the temporary loss of my son..." that struck me because it made death sound so temporal and not permanent. How has the journey been since that happened? Is it difficult to remember that it is temporary?

It is not difficult to remember that the separations we experience are temporal. This last May 5th marked 10 years since his passing. It seems like yesterday. Members of our family wear both scars and medals. There is PTSD and depression, but there is also joy and celebration. It pulls a person thin, demonstrates our own finiteness on a daily basis. Many in my family have passed away. I have experienced an inordinate amount of death for one living in the West; in the safety of the United States. My family comes from the "old country" (Russia) and we embrace the experience (post-modern before its time, lol). I am not properly Eastern Orthodox, but I hold to a number of doctrines the EO believes. One of those tenets is the belief in the living church, both seen and unseen. Death is but a thin veil that separates us for a brief season. As King David observed, "He will not return to me, but I will go to him." That's a guarantee.

I know it is a broad question, but how did you spend your time immediately following Andrew's passing? How do you pick up

and continue to move after dealing with something of that magnitude?

After some solemn moments of primal scream therapy, after basking in the love of my family and friends, after walking some really dark valleys, I… Let me say this: I kept on moving and I think that was a mistake. People think I demonstrated the proper way a man of faith, in faith, responds to such a thing. But a person can't just keep moving. Ten years later, I find myself retracing my own steps, gathering pieces of the story and of myself and trying to figure out what to do next. Ten years later I actually feel like I'm mourning like a real person. When Andrew died I was a teacher at his school and too easily slipped into "care-taker" mode, ignoring my own need to truly grieve. Just this last year, I met up with the Lost Dogs and thanked them again for how special they had allowed our relationships to become. Amidst the talk I found myself suddenly saying, "I think I'm finally truly grieving." So how does one continue? Not as the same person you were before. Andrew's life was a 15 year battle against a killer disease. You come home from the war and trust God to help you deal with whatever disorders may surface [smile] and give God glory that He has never gone anywhere and never will He go anywhere.

Can you tell us about Violet and how she did after Andy's passing? Are you still in contact with her? (Ed. Note-Violet was Andy's first love)

Sure. Violet has always been a very passionate young lady about God and her walk with Him. She leaned heavily into God, into us, and others who cared about her for comfort and responded well to that. It was a surrealistic world for her. Anybody who has lost one whom they love will tell you how they feel alone, in that they wonder, "How could anybody else know how this feels and know all that we've shared together?" In his book, *A Grief Observed*, C.S. Lewis spoke to this matter in observing how he felt lonely and wanted to be around other people; he just didn't want them to approach him or speak to him. Violet has moved out of state, but to her I am still Papa and my wife is still Mama, and we are all of us, quite in love.

What items do you still have available for purchase? The book, what discs, etc.?

Ah, ah! Like a son who knows his father's heart! Thank you. [insert real laugh] Everything. 1) *Suffer the Children* 2) *Come as a Child (or not at all)* 3) *Like an Orange to a Child*, and of course, the book.

Can you give us a little info about the upcoming release and plans to play live?

I'm very excited about this. John Piccari is producing the project, which is a terribly wonderful illustration of what brothers do for one another. He sees the need in my music (we've spoken of it often) for others to come along side and pitch in. He's doing that, along with some other friends, and I think this will be my opus—my life work. I've been earning an MS in Mental Health Counseling and have also worked closely in ministry with homeless folks who suffer various mental disorders. I've learned a great deal. The album is entirely from the perspectives of people dealing with a mental health disorder; everything from a season of depression, to schizophrenia, to Dissociative Identity Disorder. After I had composed all the songs, John bought me a copy of Alice Cooper's *From the inside*, and I'm re-devouring that wonderful work. My new work has its lows, but it doesn't stay down in the trenches either. In the end it speaks to what we all must do, and that is to live today, remembering that tomorrow will have its own problems. I would love to stage this as something of a psycho-drama-rock-show and play it down in So Cal and perhaps around Seattle or Portland. But, that is a matter for tomorrow. For today, John has his hands full with me!

Having come this far through the experience of Andy and his beating us to the pearly gates, what lessons have you learned (or experiences and truths have you discovered) that stick out the most in your mind?

In a hugely perplexing season, everything that is in the heart will come out… eventually. In a hugely vexing predicament, listen to the voice that says, "Yes, You can do this, because you're stronger than you think." People would always say, "I don't know how you do it! I could never…" and I would say, "Yes you could. He would make you able." And of course, the mantra that came out of all of this for AAR: Life is short; live well, love well. I would rephrase that as, Life is NOW; live well, love well.

Anything else that you would like to say?

Be sure to look up Camp CAACONAA on line just to see what happens when you scatter an idea. Please do visit www.andysangelsrecords.org to purchase the albums. Terry Taylor's compositions are worth the ticket alone. Keep an eye out for this new album. Next year John and I may be asking for your votes to C-Stone! It could happen. ;-)

In closing this out I wanted to share that Theo released *Even Though I Walk* which also comes with a download of the screenplay and is described by Theo as *"the so-called "basement tape" recording of Theo Obrastoff's Christmas Rock Opera "Even Though I Walk" – a lifetime opus for Obrastoff. It is a fairy tale focusing on the heart of Christmas with a prodigal edge to the story."*

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BILL MALLONEE

"We learn the ropes of life and in doing so we learn of our own gifts and our weaknesses."

Bill Mallonee has released (at least) three new albums since we had our last issue out! It is hard to keep track of everything that comes out because it all comes at an unbelievably rapid pace. I am a big fan of Bill's work, and what is exciting about these new releases are not only great new music, but we also get to hear Muriah's voice on the *Wonderland* release that came out for last Christmas. Typically she sings back up to Bill, on "Wonderland" we get her with main vocals on two tracks. I know it seems a bit late to be plugging Christmas releases, but I look at this in a couple of different ways. 1) We are super late in getting this issue out, 2) depending on how you look at it we are super early for Christmas 2012, or 3) Bill's work is timely year round regardless of the subject matter, so a Christmas release is good 12 months out of the year. Bill's music is not only the best available in the Americana world, but it is also a testament to the spirit of those who continue to persevere and push in spite of a mountain of obstacles. Bill has the unique gift of chronicling the experience and offering it back in a way that we can all relate to. I can't imagine my life without the blessing of Bill's music, it is a treasure that continues to encourage. I am especially fond of the *Slow Dark demos* because these were the precursor to one of my favorite VoL albums, *Slow Dark Train*. Below are all three new releases and a synopsis of each written by Mr. Mallonee himself.

Wonderland

This is our new Christmas EP! There are five originals plus two traditional Christmas carol arrangements by Muriah Rose. I've always tried (and seemed to be able) to write Christmas songs that have a certain year-round immediacy. Perhaps this is due to the fact that for so long I lived with a certain existential despair. The notion of "hope" seemed distant and elusive. Of this journey of faith and experience, much of what I see as evidence for God's love and His near-ness to each of us is most realized in Christmas.

Here we see God becoming vulnerable. He was becoming vulnerable to a life of poverty, vulnerable to the whims of popularity and ultimately vulnerable to the whims of the rich, privileged and powerful. It was that work that attracted me to the person and work of the Child Christ. We think you'll find the "big" themes that make this a season of deep reflection and joy here.

Slow Dark demos

Into the vaults! Our first installment is *Slow Dark demos*. These tracks were cut "live" in the studio by me, bassist Chris Bland & drummer Tom Crea in a studio in late 1996, prior to the making of the indie, garage rock album, *SLOW DARK TRAIN*. The first 10 song album, *SLOW DARK DEMOS Vol. 1,* is $8.99 and available for immediate download! PLUS: Copious liner notes regarding the record's history and making are at the site, as well! Each volume has previously unreleased songs.

Folks, it's been 15 years since this version of VoL recorded these demos. They were recorded (19 songs in all) over a 2 day period, "live," in a studio setting. *How do they strike me now?* They have held up amazingly well!

I was going for that visceral, raw energy that was characteristic of many of the great bands I loved in the 90's like REM, The Replacements and Guided by Voices. In some ways this was the most important record I was to ever make. All industry resources

had fallen away. All the "props" of label, management and radio had dissolved (remember it was 1996, kids.) Rather than call it quits, the environment and the challenge called forth in us a whole new sound and way of making music for us.

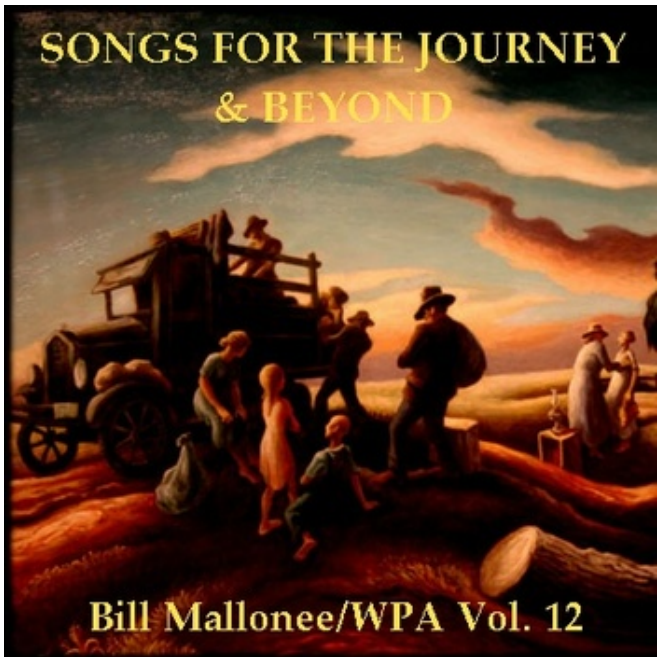
In a nutshell, here's why this album is important:

Something bright and affirming was taking place inside of me and in the band that was Vigilantes of Love. It was the first electric album in which I was able to exercise and hone my skills as a rock writer, rock guitar player, lyricist and producer.

These songs, here in their demo format, were the "life blood" of the plucky 'lil band that could. They still sound fresh, full of a wide-eyed vitality, raw-ness and conviction.

Hope you'll enjoy them as much as I did revisiting them!

Note: 19 songs were demo-ed "LIVE" over a 2 day period. This is volume 1 of a 2 Volume set. (There are 5 previously unreleased songs here in the two Archive Series installments.)



Songs for the Journey and Beyond

"Road songs" have become "life songs" for me. Travel from "A" to "B" seems to have a way of unlocking deeper parts of my spirit.

Having lived the better part of the last 20 years on the road as a "band in a van" or as a troubadour, I became immersed first-hand in what historians & writers have called the "American Experience."

Those variables of limited resources & hard luck, when fused with faith, courage & (often) sheer "pluck," were vital to transforming this great country. The idea that we could all dream and find ourselves a 'lil part of Heaven initially looked well on paper; we had (so to speak) a lot to work with here. The grandeur and resources of such a land as ours is, to my mind, unrivaled in the world.

We all play out a certain drama. We learn the ropes of life and in doing so we learn of our own gifts and our weaknesses.

We are thrown back (like it or nay) on something larger than ourselves. We try to bet on hope in the face of grief. We champion courage while attempting to keep despair at bay, and we take a stoic stock in a sober faith that "it's all going somewhere." Those ancient stories and myths you try to make your own. Call it naïve...call it infantile...call it uninformed, it is, nonetheless the "Faith" we have cobbled together from our American Experience.

It is this "faith" that attracts me to a guitar, and the possibility of a song being born; of something coming to life.

If we "dare to look it in the eye," this raw energy of our individual lives, dreams, and struggles, we will have more than enough "grit" to make for great songs. Whether it's themes of heroes, thieves, lovers, villains, misers or the "down-&-out," it has been such experiences that have informed my world without...but mostly my world within.

Early on in my life I was deeply aware of a universe that was full of great beauty, joy & hallowed-ness. Still, such beauty (earthly or heavenly) comes to us in fits and starts. It introduces itself in such fragility and vulnerability that it appears tentative, even disposable.

We are victims of all that is seen (as opposed to the unseen, even in ourselves.) Fear drives us to soul-less solutions. People get hurt. In our mad rush towards materialism as "individuals" we are easily seduced at the altars of wealth, success and violence. People and things are deemed "expendable." Even our relationships become defined in terms of "gain vs. loss."

Having lost touch with things of Spirit, we tend to devalue that hallowed-ness in the world. We miss such hallowed-ness in our neighbor, and sadly, even in ourselves. We miss Spirit, ignore it and (often) ruin it by our own devices. Though outwardly we appear to "have it made," we are often becoming living beings that are lacking a pulse...running on empty.

I count myself in such a category, punctuated with the occasional "mini-epiphany." Perhaps we all live at such an address; there's that "almost but not quite" aspect of our lives.

And, if by chance, we should wake up to that "larger, brighter world," we can embrace it, cultivate it, and above all, chalk it up humbly to grace, and "not of thyself."

And for those of us who still walk wounded, lingering in the twilight? Well, "be ye kind, tender-hearted & forgiving" to the rest of us. Such displays of virtue may be the only "sighting" of that larger, brighter world we "unbelievers" will ever see.

Maybe that's what these songs for the journey & beyond are all about.

billmallonee.net
billmalloneemusic.bandcamp.com

HM MAGAZINE

A LETTER FROM DOUG VAN PELT

Below is a letter from Doug Van Pelt, I contacted him a couple of months back and asked if he could write a bit about what is happening with HM Magazine so we could share it with our readers. I'm sure that you guys know who Doug is; he has been the editor of HM Magazine for 26 years. The demand for a different technology has pushed many a print book and magazine right out of business. Fortunately for us, Doug stayed current with the upcoming trends and is still running HM, just in a different platform. HM's presence and contribution are undeniable! While always focusing on metal and its varied genres, HM also gave a voice to notable acts that were outside of the mainstream CCM arena. HM Magazine is a treasured act in the scope of Christian magazines and they have endured while multiple others have fallen to the side. We need to support this endeavor, and if it is info on the heavy side of the music spectrum, they are the best thing going! Please read the letter below from Doug, he gives an explanation of what is happening and then we also reprinted his column directly from the magazine. On a personal level, I use the HM app, it works great and it keeps me in the 'know'. Support Doug and HM, spread the word and let's help take HM to the next level!

Well, long story short, HM Magazine has announced that it is going out of print. There is much I can say about that, but in the meantime, that is now headed towards the past and the future is (as far as I can tell) focused on making the digi-editions we've been doing consistently since 2007 as our one and only thing (if you count the digi-edition, the website and the app versions to be one and the same). While our archived digi-editions (which go back to 2007) are free to read, the current year's issues are password-protected for subscribers only.

What I'd like to do is go monthly with our digi-editions starting in January. You have helped me greatly with your assistance in knowing who to cover, sending me press releases to keep our news fresh and relevant and also helping me get important interviews and album reviews done on a timely and regular basis. I can't say it enough: "Thanks for your help and doing what you do!" I look forward to continuing to work with you as we transition from paper + digits to just ones and zeros alone (pardon the metaphor). I wanted you to know as soon as possible, but I have to admit, it would be fun to see who actually reads the "Note from the Editor" on the Table of Contents page.:)

I'm not closing the door on print forever. If budgets allow, we might do an occasional special edition and, who knows, maybe the budgets will grow exponentially and we'll be back in print before you know it. I'm realistic and do not expect that to happen (at least any time soon), but I'm keeping my options and mind open. Please let me know what you think. Attached is my announcement to readers from the "Editor's Note" on the Table of Contents page. Please read that, as it expresses and explains some of the in's and out's of why HM is going out of print.

(ed.note - Below is the letter from Doug as it appeared in HM Magazine)

I don t really want to say this, but HM Magazine is going to have to go out of print – at least for awhile. We are going to shift our (current) focus from print+digital to digital and nothing but the digital. We will honor all the regular subscriptions that are out there. In fact, we will triple their longevity as it translates into accessing the digital with a username and password. That means your one year normal (print) subscription will extend to three years of digital. I hope that those of you who have had a normal subscription realize that you have had access to the digi edition as well. If you haven t bothered to check it out online in addition to your print version, there s no time like the present to familiarize yourself with the browser and how it works with your computer, notebook or tablet. It s pretty simple, and it s pretty cool. Those of you who were already subscribed via the digital only editions; well, you were ahead of the game, and you will keep on rolling with your current subscription. The various app versions have rolled out over multiple platforms (iPhone, Android, with more to come), and these will be accessible on a per issue and separate basis.

Yeah, I have to admit, this feels like a defeat for me. I m okay, though. I can hold my head up, because I know I gave it my all to keep this magazine on the printed page. I've placed this publication in the Lord's very capable hands time and time again. After going without a regular salary for over a year and incurring a mountain of debt for this business, I drew a line in the sand with this deadline. I figured what amount we could pull in with advertising sales and still maintain a profitable business. I set that reasonable amount as both a goal and a litmus test and also sort of a fleece before the Lord. I had confidence that, whichever way this turned out, that God was in control, and He'd guide and direct my paths. Even though HM has been like my baby, I've had to give it back to God and watch it change before our eyes.

If the digi edition of HM Magazine prospers, I would very much like to bring the print version back. I'm holding out hope that this will happen someday down the road, although I m making no promises, and I m certainly not holding my breath. To find out if/when this will happen, by all means, read my blog and/or the free weekly HM enewsletter for announcements. Thanks for reading.

Doug Van Pelt, Editor
HM Magazine - est. 1985
www.hmmag.com

P.S. Check out: the HM Commercial Spots #1, #2 and #3 at www.hmmag.com/etc/ & follow me at www.twitter.com/dooglar or www.facebook.com/HM.Magazine and check out my first novel at www.deserthighbook.com

ALLAN AGUIRRE + MEN AS TREES WALKING

"There's a sound... pt. 2"

Interview by Steve Ruff

In the last issue we caught up with Allan Aguirre and found out about his band Men as Trees Walking. Because of the nature of the conversation and the depth of what we were discussing, I thought it would be cool to do a follow up interview and talk about things of an even more Biblical nature. We have always tried to maintain a certain distance from establishing any type of theological persuasion in these pages because there are so many people who see things so differently. Having said that, this isn't us trying to argue a theology or a persuasion, I just wanted to ask more questions about Men as Trees Walking because this is what Allan calls a "prophetic" ministry and I found the scriptural definition of this to be pretty relevant to the music. I thought that our readers would also hopefully enjoy reading about what Aguirre is committed to and what he believes as it relates to scripture, to his music and to his passions. One other thing, I asked Allan if I could grab a couple of pictures from his Facebook page, I don't know who took these but would like to give credit where it is due if the photographer would like to contact us. I thought these images were pretty amazing!

With such a heavy emphasis on prophecy and the prophetic and the OT scripturally, how do you see that fits in with the NT?

It fits in very nicely, in fact. First off we need to realize that the NT should never have been propagated as "new"; "new" as in "separate" or "replace". The vast majority of Christianity has been taught for centuries to believe and to approach their walks and the study of the Word in this way: a separation between Old and New - as if the OT was another Covenant – the covenant for the Jews, exclusively - and the NT, the covenant for Christians, Jew or Gentile, exclusively – a separate Covenant. Nothing could be further from the truth! I know we generally get "New Testament" and "New Covenant" from Matthew 26:28, Mark 14:24, Luke 22:20 but the Greek transliterated word used for "new", kainos, in the Strongs (#2537) means "as respects form: recently made, fresh, recent, unused, unworn - as respects substance: of a new kind, unprecedented, novel, uncommon". There's no mention of "separate" or "replaced". One translation has "This cup is the New Covenant, ***ratified*** by my blood, which is being poured out for you." (emphasis mine) Ratified (verb) sign or give formal consent to (a treaty, contract, or agreement), making it officially valid. I love that.

This "new" Covenant is a continued covenant - entirely and absolutely rooted and established in the "old" Covenant. This is a huge revelation. There ***is*** no "new" Covenant without the "old" to base the "new," continued covenant, on. Another point, which I find mind boggling that most people don't understand or apply to this is that the writers of the NT based everything they wrote, everything they believed and everything they understood on what Jesus spoke and modeled and the Tanakh (5 Books of Moses, The Prophets and The Psalms = The OT). There was no NT.

When the NT says "word" or "scripture(s)" it's exclusively referring to the Tanakh – the Scriptures – not the 66-book compilation we call the Bible. It wouldn't exist in this form for 300+ years from the last dated writing of the NT. I know this may sound silly, but I can't tell you how many Christians actually believe that the NT is referencing the Bible. It's ludicrous! So again, this whole thing is based and founded on the OT exclusively. I have heard it suggested that the NT is something like 70% OT re-quoted or paraphrased. A lot of our NT one liners are actually re-quotes from the OT. So in regards to your question, how does prophecy, the prophetic and the OT fit in to the NT, it fits very naturally, actually.

The entire content of the NT is prophesied in the OT:

The Gospels:

1. The promise of Messiah.
2. A Levitical Priest, Zacharias, whose wife (Mary's cousin) is a descendent of Aaron the brother of Moses, to them is birthed John, a Nazarite from the womb – in the spirit and power of Elijah – to proclaim Him, Messiah.
3. The birth of Messiah, on or around The Feast of Tabernacles (our September/October)
4. Jesus on numerous occasions states "until I fulfill everything that has been written about me in the Books of Moses, The Torah (law of Moses), The Prophets and some Psalms".
5. The teachings of Jesus are entirely OT based.
6. The arrest, preparation and death of Messiah mirrored the Feast of Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread.
7. Jesus is sacrificed on the same mountain Abraham attempted to sacrifice his only son, Isaac. That was very prophetic in nature.
8. The resurrection of Messiah mirrored the Feast of First Fruits.
9. After His resurrection Jesus expounds to His disciples all the things in the Scriptures (OT) concerning Him. He then reminds them that all things must be fulfilled (future tense) which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets concerning Him and then opened their understanding that they might comprehend these Scriptures. (Luke 24:27, 44, 45) Jesus is once again reestablishing His foundation and teaching on the Torah - post resurrection. The same established teaching foundation He held pre-

Acts:
1. Peter connects a prophetic Psalm by David to Judas and his replacement.
2. Pentecost occurs on the same exact day that Moses received Torah on Mt. Sinai (Shavu'ot). That's not necessarily "prophetic" but very prophetic in nature.
3. Peter's speech to the pilgrims in Jerusalem that day quotes the prophet Joel and David.
4. They meet in the temple courts daily and at the hour of prayer (in observance of Torah). Again, not specifically "prophetic" but, in modern Christianity, this (Torah observance) is supposedly an OT / Jewish-specific only observance and not "for the NT gentile church".
5. Peter, after healing the lame man at the temple gate called Beautiful, quotes Deuteronomy in his message and refers to Jesus as "a prophet like Moses".
6. In his defense for the healing of the lame man, Peter, to the people's rulers, elders and Torah teachers, quotes a prophetic Psalm regarding Jesus as the "cornerstone rejected".
7. Stephen's whole defense is based on the OT.
8. Philip's conversion of the Ethiopian Treasury Minister was based on a prophecy by Isaiah.
9. The gospel opening up to the gentiles was also prophesied in the OT.
10. On various occasions, Paul interrupts his missionary journeys to return to Jerusalem to observe the biblical feasts.
11. James, boasting to Paul, declares that tens of thousands of believers in Jerusalem are zealous for the Torah.
12. Paul, acting on the council of James, submits to a Nazarite purification ritual.
13. Paul, while offering temple sacrifices in accordance with the Nazarite purification ritual, is jumped by Jews from Asia Minor.
14. Paul defines Christianity, The Way, as a sect of Judaism and admits to believing everything written in the Torah of Moses and the Prophets. (The letters / epistles) The foundational teachings found in the writings of the Apostles are all based and grounded in Jesus and the OT.

I'm not disputing the validity of the prophetic, just curious to your view of how it relates today if the Spirit is available to all men, and therefore communicates with everyone?

I believe that the Spirit is available to all men today - in the exact manner and with the exact power and manifestations we read about in both the OT and NT. I believe that that same Spirit ***desires*** to communicate with everyone today, as He did then, but in the same way that that communication was entirely dependent on the Human then, that communication is entirely dependent on the human today. The Spirit could be "communicating," but that human may not have the ability to hear, see or discern that communication. I also see, in scripture and in real life today, that this communication, manifestation and power are contingent on our sowing into that level of relationship. If God is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow – and if the same Spirit that rose Jesus from the dead, the same Spirit that dwelt in Peter and Paul, dwells in me, and Peter's shadow could heal the sick and both Peter and Paul could raise the dead, then so can I - and I'm not raising the dead and my shadow doesn't heal the sick. What's changed? Not God. Not His Spirit. We have.

I do obviously not believe this thing as much as those two did nor am I sowing into this thing as much as they both did because the same result is available to me today. Jesus empowered the disciples over sickness, unclean and evil spirits and death ***pre-Pentecost***. He also declared, pre-Pentecost, that His followers would speak in tongues, heal the sick, cast out demons and raise the dead. I see these as the "bundled" gifts that come with salvation, if you will. "Earnestly desire the best gifts," Paul writes. "Do we all prophesy? Do we all speak in tongues," etc., he continues. "No," was his answer. In Corinthians Paul states that he wished we all prophesied and spoke in tongues. In Ephesians he writes, "He made *some* prophets." Being a prophet and being prophetic are 2 different things. But what's the real problem? The real problem is the vast majority of Christianity doesn't believe any of this is "for us today." That's going to really hinder the Spirit! After revealing Himself to the synagogue in Nazareth, Jesus was unable to do many miracles that day ***because of their unbelief***. This is Jesus we're talking about! How does unbelief render ***us*** impotent to the power and depth of revelation of God? Isn't this the same Jesus that spent most nights during His public ministry in the mountains praying and fasting? What does that tell us? The majorities of Christians I encounter don't fast, let alone live a life of prayer. I believe the same Holy Spirit found in both the OT and the NT is available to us today and that the same desire He had to communicate with man in the OT and NT is His same desire today.

Do you still see that the same rules apply to today's prophets as it did in the bible?

Yes. God has no shadow of turning and is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow.

Just the term "prophetic" carries a huge amount of weight, what are the implications if you "hear" wrong?

I absolutely agree. It's not anything to be taken lightly. Paul wrote that we know and prophesy in part. He also wrote, "let us prophesy in proportion to our faith." As in anything, it takes practice - practice to grow our faith and our gifting / abilities. I think Christians so remove the biblical text from practical common sense that the idea of a "school" to learn this stuff isn't a concept easily grasped. We know Paul taught in such a school for two years (Acts). These things have to be modeled in discipleship. That discipling is going to involve trial and error.

You're asking me "what are the implications if you 'hear' wrong". The implications are twofold:

1. to the hearer or receiver of an incorrect prophecy or prophetic word.
2. to the giver of an incorrect prophecy or prophetic word.

To the hearer, it can be disastrous. This is where spiritual discernment and the testing / judging of spirits is crucial. This also stresses the absolute need for discipleship and a firm biblical foundation. If the hearer is new to the dynamic of the prophetic or just new to Christianity, this is where the discipler or "mentor" comes in handy. Unfortunately, many know little to nothing about spiritual discernment or the testing of spirits, and actual discipleship is a rarity in the church, let alone the discipleship of spiritual gifts. It's impossible to model something you don't believe in or don't know. This is a travesty and the norm within the church, which leads us to the giver of prophetic words.

To the giver, it can be disastrous. We've all seen it. It's caused many to renounce

or discredit the subject matter. It's at epidemic proportions today and not without merit. Just because they say they are prophets or prophetic doesn't mean that they are. If they are then they have the responsibility to hone their gifting in private so as not to fall into the "false prophet" category. Or, prophesy within the context of the biblical teaching on the matter. Gee, what a concept. We are extremely careful to call anything we say or do "prophetic". Paul wrote, "Let two or three prophets speak, while the others weigh what is said. And if something is revealed to a prophet who is sitting down, let the first one be silent. For you can all prophesy one by one, with the result that all will learn something and all will be encouraged. Also, the prophets' spirits are under the prophets' control; for God is not a God of unruliness but of shalom. If anyone thinks he is a prophet or is endowed with the Spirit, let him acknowledge that what I am writing you is a command of the Lord. But if someone doesn't recognize this, then let him remain unrecognized. So, my brothers, eagerly seek to prophesy; and do not forbid speaking in tongues; but let all things be done in a proper and orderly way." (1 Corinthians 14:29-33a, 37-40) This is real instruction on the subject and we are, thankfully, under this type of scrutiny, covering, council and accountability by other prophets and/or prophetic people. Like I said, we take this subject seriously and it's not one we want to be lazy or careless about.

I think this would be a great place to continue with Paul on this matter, "Brothers, don't be children in your thinking. In evil, be like infants; but in your thinking, be grown-up. In the Torah it is written, 'By other tongues, by the lips of foreigners I will speak to this people. But even then they will not listen to me,' says ADONAI. Thus tongues are a sign not for believers but for unbelievers, while prophecy is not for unbelievers but for believers. So if the whole congregation comes together with everybody speaking in tongues, and uninstructed people or unbelievers come in, won't they say you're crazy? But if you all prophesy, and some unbeliever or uninstructed person enters, he is convicted of sin by all, he is brought under judgment by all, and the secrets of his heart are laid bare; so he falls on his face and worships God, saying, 'God is really here among you!'" (Acts 14: 20-25) Isn't that beautiful?

In the first interview you said, "This means that if God doesn't show up when we play, if the Spirit doesn't manifest in some form, be it healing, salvation, deliverance, word of knowledge; if we don't "provoke" or provide the atmosphere for an intersection between the King of the Universe and the people "listening" when we play, then something is/went wrong." Do you believe that God "showing up" is only proved by an action like one of these manifestations that you mentioned?

Great question and a tricky one; tricky because it can "pigeon hole" me but great because I think it's important to really "know" what "God looks like" in our physical realm. Just based on the verses above we see the value of a prophetic manifestation in revealing the reality of God in an individual's life. A large majority of the time we're seeing this occurring in the lives of believers as well; being "...convicted of sin by all,... brought under judgment by all, and the secrets of his heart are laid bare; so he falls on his face and worships God, saying, 'God is really here among you!'" The manifestation of God, the *super*natural in the natural (which is still natural, by the way, it's just super) has always had an impact on homosapiens, good or bad. That "manifestation" can be a still small voice but there are more instances in the biblical text where His manifestation was of an action best described as "signs and wonders." Like Paul says, these types of manifestations provoke the response, "God is really here among you!" That comes in pretty handy when you're doing what you're doing. Heh...

Can you explain what the "whosoever" movement is?

The best way to describe it is by letting them describe it. Go to thewhosoevers.com/about. Also, check out their mini documentary: thewhosoevers.com/documentary

menastreeswalking.net
comeandlive.com
facebook.com/MenAsTreesWalking
allanaguirre.com

The Violet Burning at the Balzer Theater (11/1/11)

Catching the Violet Burning in concert is something like capturing a few fireflies in a jar on a dark night: magical, rare, illuminating. The first time I saw them was at a large church and I remember realizing I was onto something special not only because of the music (Michael Pritzl's beautiful piano rendition of "Silver" hooked me) , but by the fact that fans had driven from states away for the chance to see the beloved band. In the years that have followed, I have caught them in smaller night club venues, coffeehouses, and chapels– All jars of their sort, housing something bright from the night sky for a moment.

My recent venture to hear songs from their latest release, the three disc *Story of Our Lives*, involved a jaunt to the Balzer Theater in downtown Atlanta. Hosted by Bezalel Church, the Violets soared thru at least fifteen tunes on a red curtained stage. A slideshow of the album's compelling artwork depicting concepts from "Story" ran throughout.

I arrived a little late, breathless from trying to find the joint, and things were already getting rowdy with "Machine beat sabbatha":

I'm a son of thunder, baby – I'm the son of thunder and rain
We won't be coming – no, we won't be running back
We won't be coming back no more
We're not your kind – we are not your kind

Thundering indeed were the drums played by the impressive Lenny Beh who doubled as violinist. Daryl Dawson's steady presence as the bassist with the most is always delightful. Michael's vocals and intricate guitar work thrill, ranging in mood and octave as unpredictable as the wind, making the "story" showcase a page turner for sure.

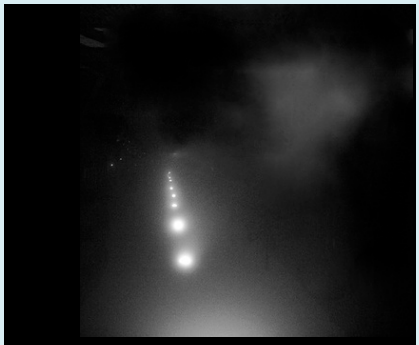
Ripping relentlessly through "Rock is Dead" (live is the only way to experience this one), "Imminent Collapse" and "Sung", the sound transitioned to the moody, thumping "Low", and personal favorites "As I Am" and "Underwater"(the more I live the less I know) whose drums pounded right into my soul, its guitar gently lapping against your heart's shoreline. Vibes settled as Michael picked up the acoustic guitar and did a heart rending "Light poured down on me". The band returned with the beautiful "In ruin" and the insta-classics "Mon Desir" and "Made for You".

As an encore, Pritzl returned with the standout "Gorgeous" then asked the crowd "Are there any songs you'd actually like to hear?". Many were shouted out: the staple "Song of the harlot" the tune that put the band on the map and still moves, the exultant "40 weight" and "Invitacion Fountain", the more recent and touching "Hmm"(all my life looking for love I cannot find, hold me now, I think I'm breaking) . He then quickly composed a montage and one song bled into another. Hearts and voices were lifted in unison, sometimes just the men, sometimes the women, and then together. Many eyes were closed and faces hungry for connection seemed met in that place.

Personally, I walked back to my car that evening with a cup of grace kinda overflowing. I have found in my music listening years, identifying songs with varying emotions and experiences, the ones that mean the most move me to a hopeful place and heal along the way (and involve a little head banging). The Violet Burning does this successfully- each song is a story unto itself, alive; my frozen heart, at least, recovers listening to them.

Catch 'em when they fly thru your town. Invite them to come.

- Holly Etchison; November 14, 2011, originally published at The Blue Indian



Leslie DuPre Grimaud – Locust
2011 Subdivision Theory

I'm sitting at work while I am listening to this song, plugged into my headphones and on the verge of tears. Seriously, this song really has me on the verge of tears. There are few artists that can convey the depth and emotion with just their voice in the way that Leslie DuPre Grimaud can. This is a stunningly powerful track that almost leaves me speechless. This is the third track that Leslie has released through the Subdivision Theory label as she continues to build her Sinking Ships project. Locust begins with the most beautiful and haunting ambience that reminds me of the settling of fog somewhere in the back recesses of a black and white dream. The bass line here is thick and solid, and once Leslie begins to sing her voice fills the track and absolutely brings the music to an altogether different level. Rounding out the cast on this track is Herb Grimaud, [r}topia and Andy Prickett. The lyrics are poetry, the music is strong and the bar is set high for the next track. This is good music, this is music that moves and separates. Please visit the bandcamp site where you can download this track (and her other 2) in any audio file format you could want. This is the music that we should be supporting – there is nothing else out there that is this good… really.

– Steve Ruff

Low and Behold – Blood Red
2011 Burnt Toast

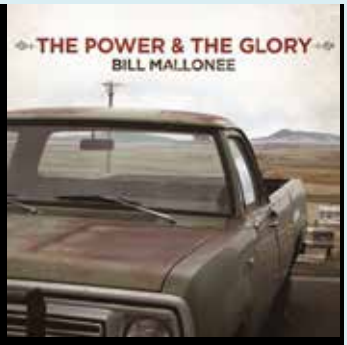
I was pretty excited when I saw the announcement for this release. Low & Behold is Jason Martin from SF59 and Ryan Clark most notably from Demon Hunter… but I am more of fan of his work in Focal Point and Training for Utopia. I think Clark has huge talent and I was actually glad to see him do something outside of Demon Hunter, which has become pretty formulaic at this point. Martin is pretty solid at anything he puts his hands on and it is always a treat to hear him branch out with something new. The packaging on this LP is top notch! This is a 12" vinyl single with the title track "Blood Red," and the b-side "Violent Sound." The music has a heavy Depeche Mode vibe to it, but definitely has a unique twist that plays from both artists strengths. The record is dark red in color and comes in a gatefold cover with double sided artwork. Definitely impressive artwork and music, bring on the full length!

– Steve Ruff

James and Evander – Constellating EP+2
2011 Velvet Blue Music

James and Evander are one of the latest groups to join the roster over at Velvet Blue Music – which is a great thing for a new band. Velvet Blue continues to stretch and redefine the story of solid output from an indie label that really cares about the artist and the music they offer. James and Evander dropped this little EP called Constellating + 2 several months back and I snapped it up right away. I was immediately drawn to the lush notes and the relaxed atmosphere and vibe that came through the speakers. It is definite electronic pop music, but more dreamy and ethereal than dance pop. These guys could fit well on a bill with the likes of M83. There are three songs here and 2 extras that are remixes (the title track "Constellating" and the second track "Slap Bracelets"). The third track is titled "Really Real" and makes for a short, but genuine, first EP with Velvet Blue. If you get this through iTunes it is a mere $3.99! You can purchase in FLAC format through their bandcamp site, and you can get a hard copy for only $5.00! The hardcopy also comes with an immediate download which is cool. These are great sounds that will please your ears!

– Steve Ruff



Bill Malloness – The Power & the Glory
2011 Independent

I have always made a point to cover every Bill Mallonee release that I can. Bill is without a doubt one of the most prolific artists around. His music is a rarity – not only in the sense of how much better it gets through the years, but also how frequent and consistent his output is. Bill has honed his craft as one of the real voices for the 'everyman' in this day and age. There is a weighty and meaningful quality to Mallonee's work; these aren't just songs to tap your foot to. These are songs that are sung with the conviction of salvation and a visceral quality that speaks from a penetrating perspective. I am always surprised at how consistently good Bill's songwriting is… he puts out such a large body of songs that I keep thinking 'the next one' won't be as good, but I am wrong every time. That brings us here to his latest, *The Power & the Glory*.

With over 40 albums to his credit, to say that Power & the Glory is Mallonee's best would be a bold statement. Having said that, now hear this: this is definitely Mallonee's best to date! It is all here on this album; the quality, the depth, the imagery and lyrical illustration. The track placement is spot on, from the opening licks of "Carolina, Carolina," down to the howling "Ghosts That I Run With," and then straight on through to the brilliantly and lyrically imaginative track "Wide Awake with Orphan Eyes (Mirror Ball Moon)."

This release runs deep with the impressive guitar work, and while I would say this is jangly and noisy in all the right places, it is a guitar heavy album that is fluid and not disjointed at all. The guitar takes center stage but never feels burdensome or overpowering. To take a page from Mallonee's book, the guitar is like the conductor that steers this 12 car train into the station with grace and grand intent. The harmonizing between Bill and Muriah hits the mark. On tracks like "Just to Feel the Heat (You Never Told Me Your House Was Haunted)" the harmony is pristine, pure and absolutely accomplished.

These tracks were picked from the various WPA Volumes that Bill has been releasing every few months for the last 3 years or so. To hear these songs first in a setting that was more raw and undeveloped was a plus, because hearing them in this fully evolved environment makes the listener really appreciate the hard work that has been put into polishing these diamonds up. After years of slugging it out in the trenches, Bill has dialed in a process that is yielding his best work, and we are the better for it. Whether he's singing/playing to bring attention to social issues like in "Keep the Home Fires Burning," or scratching at the scab of our humanity in "Ever Born into This World," Bill keeps getting better and better with each release.

The travesty here is that too few folks know about Bill and his work. That is where you, the readers, come in. If everyone reading this told just two friends about Bill's work, that could make a dramatic difference with his career and touring schedule and the best part is that it would get this fantastic music out into the public. Stop by the download store where you can get free music, inexpensive music and hard copy disc; but regardless of the format, *Power & the Glory* is a career defining album!

– Steve Ruff

The Beckoning - Demystifying the Oracle
2011 Independent

This was a welcomed release as well as a nice surprise to the ears! I am a huge fan of metal, but I really like the more extreme genres of the spectrum. The Beckoning is a Canadian band that I can best describe as symphonic doom metal with some definite melodic death metal mixed in with a very ethereal backdrop. It works great and is a fun ride from start to end! Meghann and Roy Turple are the masterminds behind the music. They bring together a formula that is unique, nicely layered and very well assembled. I don't know a whole lot about these two – not sure if they are married or siblings or how they are related. But they have put out a great release that is very reminiscent of the better points of bands like Dimmu Borgir or My Silent Wake. This is diversity of the metal genre at some of its finest! Oh, and the download is free!

– Steve Ruff

Bill Mason Band – No Sham!
2011 Born Twice Records

"Most Christian Music was 6 years behind secular music, the Bill Mason Band were only 6 months!" While many debate who the first true Christian punk rock band was, some point to the Bill Mason Band and their fairly obscure *No Sham!* album. Even though punk definitely got heavier in the 80s and 90s, BMB was exactly what punk rock sounded like in 1979: loud, gritty, authentic, snarly and full of attitude. You can hear The Ramones and The Clash all over Mason and company, sprinkled in with a healthy dose of pre-80s new wave. There is even a bit of reggae and funk here and there. Of course, *No Sham!* Quickly went out of print and became hard to find. Now it is finally seeing the light of digital day as part of Born Twice Record's "Legends Remastered" series. Born Twice went all out bringing this lost classic back to life. The packaging and re-mastering are all stellar. The songs sound crisp and full, almost as if they were recorded last year in a modern studio. You even get a great write up of the band's history by Mason himself and some rare live photos. If you are a fan of late 1970's-era punk or even classic rock, this album is a must have for you.

– Matt Crosslin

Omar Domkus – Shades of a Shadow
2009 Independent

Omar Domkus has crafted a completely unique album that is what I would describe as world music influenced ambience with slight touches of jazz influenced percussion and fretless bass driven goodness. The entire album is relaxing and restful. Domkus sounds as if he's just having fun and really putting his heart and his soul into *Shades of a Shadow*. Most of you know Omar as the bassist for the punk-driven, genre-shattering band Scaterd Few that kicked in the doors years ago with his brother Allan Aguirre. This is a far move away from the sounds of Scaterd Few, but it is also a unique view into the artist's journey of progression as a musician. We can also see where many of these ideas and tunes played a vital role in Scaterd Few's reggae based punk rock songs that in and of themselves really broke down the rules and roles of which music defined what sound. Allan also pops up on here having written the track "Tiananmen Square" with Omar. This is a great album, honest in its approach and content, and unique to the stuff that we hear in the music world today. If you live in or around the Phoenix area, you should jump at the chance to catch Omar playing live. It is a unique opportunity to catch a soloist who plays exclusively on a fretless bass!

– Steve Ruff

The Sea Wolf Mutiny – The Last Season
2011 Independent

I need to check around and see if members of The Sea Wolf Mutiny have some connection with any Velvet Blue Music artists. I could easily see this band fitting in perfectly with the current bands on the VBM roster. The Mutiny is led by indie, artistic, swirling music capped off by some slightly unique vocals. Bobby Hatfield's voice is unique enough that he doesn't sound like everyone else, but not so out there as to become an acquired taste. I see the words 'indie' 'folk' and 'post' throw about a lot with this band. Indie and post I get – but I'm not seeing the folk as much. Not that this is a bad thing – just more of an FYI IMO. Many of the songs on here even remind me slightly of some of the songs off of the new Coldplay album… even though I believe *The Last Season* came out first. I also appreciate

that the guitars and keyboards are well mixed into the overall sound in most songs. Some bands with the same list of influences as The Sea Wolf Mutiny tend to lean heavily on one instrument at the expense of the other. They also have a new three song Christmas ep worth checking out. You can find their music through most of the usual digital channels, but on BandCamp you can name your price and format.

– Matt Crosslin

The Bloody Strummers – Return of the Halcyon Days
2011 Independent

Joshua Lory and Matt Biggers are no strangers to Down the Line readers. Both guys play on the latest LS Underground record and Josh is also one of the members of the upcoming Lifesavers project. In addition to Knott's bands, both guys played in Soul Device. Josh has his project Western Grace; Matt has The Dark Reactions. The Bloody Strummers is another project that these guys have been working on for quite some time, and it is an absolute gem of a record! *Return of the Halcyon Days* is definitely one of my favorite albums that I heard back in 2011. This record has it all: elements of pure tripped out bluesy Americana, dense garage rocked out psychedelic and a hazy, shoe gaze-y essence that totally molds the better parts of so many genres. It really comes out as a clean, excellently produced album that is just long enough, but really leaves me wanting just a little more. My favorite song is "Old Scratch Hangs His Hat." It reminds me of Ian Astbury vocals powered through a smoky clang of cymbals and sludgy chugging bass line, topped off by guitar work that rings, winds and wraps the entire track in a glistening shimmer of sonic vibration. Biggers sings "Welcome to the party, welcome to the endless night". "Old Scratch" has been my favorite from day one, but the runner up would have to be "Theme 2012" which starts out like this shoegaze spaced-out fuzz rock tune that continuously reenergizes itself into an almost hypnotic track of instrumental grandeur…yep, I think it really is that good! "Pirate Radio" is another favorite that sounds like Brian Jonestown Massacre channeling the Rolling Stones. I totally recommend listening to this through headphones so you can really hear the layers of sound and energy that pervade each track individually. This release was mixed and mastered by Masaki Liu who is an absolutely amazing at what he does. Stop by the BandCamp site and check this out, support great music and tell your friends.

– Steve Ruff

Nate Houge – Reform Follows Function
2011 Independent

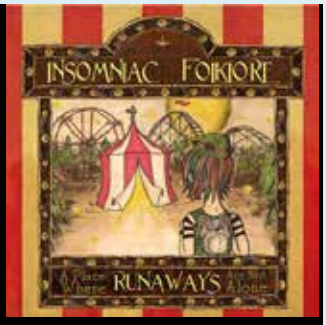
I don't know about you, but the title of this CD always makes me sit and think for a while. The music on the disc has the same effect – take for example the line "Where have all the heretics gone?" So many "heroes of the faith" through the centuries were branded as heretics. Are the people we label as heretics today actually speaking blasphemy or reform? At first I wasn't sure if I liked this album or not, but listening more it has become quite the grower. Houge has an alternative Americana folk rock vibe going that falls somewhere between Daniel Amos and Bill Mallonee. This album is indie all the way but with clean and clear production qualities. A great find that deserves a wider audience.

– Matt Crosslin

Pospolite Ruszenie – Swiebodnosc
2011 Independent

The thing that is so amazing about music is that it transcends religion, sex, race, color and language. It is universal in its appeal because of the sounds that are created, not just because of words that are spoken or sung. There are some bands that sing in a language other than English that I absolutely love; Einsturzende Neubauten is one of my favorite bands, and Rammstein are another solid act that sings in their native German language. Pospolite Ruszenie is a band that Matt sent me the link to and recommended I check out. I went to the website and found out these guys are Polish! I don't think I have ever even heard Polish music before, but this is a great introduction. These guys are a six piece band from Poland; their name translates to a pre-13th century Polish term describing the mobilization of armed forces. These guys play a really incredible fusion of folk, metal, renaissance and classic rock; there is a dose of the death metal growl that pops up in just the right places. These guys also play on replicas of period instruments which is unique and cool. Their lyrics are drawn from Polish poetry and scripture. This EP is free as a download and a professional act all the way around. The production is clean and the music is crisp, you need to check this out!

– Steve Ruff



Insomniac Folklore – A Place Where Runaways are not Alone
2011 Independent

Matt introduced me to this band, so I checked them out and was immediately pleased with the sound. These folks hail from Portland, OR and have developed a hodge podge style that mixes folk, rock, elements of punk and an overall sense of good times and sideshow antics. Led by Dr. Folklore (Rev. Tyler Hentschel), the bands bio is a tale told by a storyteller that weaves a yarn and leaves you guessing. The music is fun, Hentschel's voice is deep and uneven which is quite perfect for the band. There are definite elements of bands like Wovenhand, maybe even Tom Waits is conjured up, but I wouldn't say that Insomniac Folklore is of the caliber of those acts. That isn't a dig either – I like Insomniac Folklore. It is steam punk-y and a good time with plenty of staying power. I'm going to check out their back catalog, and I look forward to what comes next.

– Steve Ruff

Vaga Angel One (2011) by Rick McDonough